

Course outline: Screenwriting

The MA in Screenwriting is a specialism within the broader MA in Film and Television.

The 1st year of the course establishes the basic principles of screenwriting and visual storytelling, and introduces writers to many of the different forms of writing they'll encounter throughout the course, including short fiction films and animations, short stage plays, film treatments, original formats for TV series and Games. Ideas for longer form projects will be developed, both for film and TV, and different forms and genres explored: realism, fantasy and sci-fi, non-linear narrative, adaptation and fiction derived from fact. The groundwork is set for developing a feature screenplay and in the Autumn term, the writers will tackle a full-length screenplay.

The 2nd year is devoted to further workshops, another full-length screenplay and an hour long television script and bible, plus any collaboration on Fiction or Animation graduation films or on a graduation project with the Games Department.

The course ends with extensive introductions to the industry with preparation on the practicalities and legalities of working. In this process, writers learn to pitch the projects in their portfolio, understand the ecology of the wider industry and their potential place in it.

Year One

Assessed Modules and more informal Workshops will cover these issues:

- *Telling the Story in Pictures* - general introduction to all the different kinds of writing that will be covered in the course.
- Developing ideas with directors and producers
- Animation 1 exercise with Animation Directors
- *Beginning, Middle & End* practical filmmaking exercise with Documentary Directors
- Developing ideas with Fiction Directors for First Year Films
- *Beyond Time* - writing a short script for fiction directors to shoot
- *Without Images* radio workshop with Sound, Composing and Editing
- Writing an original format for TV series with Producing
- Theatre - developing a short play and practising the essential difference between writing for stage and screen
- Animation 2 exercise with Animation Directors
- Further development of feature film projects

- Courtroom exercise in collaboration with Documentary – visiting a courtroom as the inspiration for a treatment for a film or TV show
- Completing the short play which will be rehearsed with two professional theatre directors and performed at the Soho Theatre (or similar venue) with an ensemble cast of professional actors
- *Movie in a Month* - writing a full-length feature film script
- Originating and developing a dramatic monologue for TV with the TV Entertainment Directors
- Games design - multi departmental collaboration on a short sequence
- Grad animation development

Year Two

In the 2nd year of the Screenwriting MA, the curriculum is more tailor-made for the individual writers, from within the range of activities in the NFTS curriculum, with the aim of compiling an individual and varied graduation portfolio.

- Development and completion of TV pilot script & bible
- Development and completion of feature script
- Potential collaboration with Fiction Directors on digi-fiction film
- Potential collaboration with Animation or Fiction Directors on graduation films
- Potential collaboration with Games on graduation project
- Development of film and TV treatments
- Development and completion of Dissertation
- *Meet the Industry* and *Life After the NFTS* sessions with visiting professionals - writers, agents, producers, commissioners, etc. - and NFTS Screenwriting graduates
- *Graduation Screenings* – Industry screenings of all NFTS Directors' finished films, animations and games, many of which writers will have scripted
- *Screenwriters' Graduation Showcase* – Industry showcase directed by two theatre directors of short extracts from graduates' work performed by an ensemble of actors at the Soho Theatre (or similar).