

CINEMATIC ARTS

Motion Pictures (M.F.A.)

The Department of Cinematic Arts prepares a new generation of innovators, storytellers and leaders to succeed in the film, television, and digital emergent technologies. The M.F.A. in Motion Pictures guide students to advance their technical proficiency and critical studies while learning innovative narrative skills. Students concentrate in production, screenwriting, or producing.

The M.F.A. in Motion Pictures offers a comprehensive curriculum in the creative uses of technology, narrative and documentary, positioning students with the business practices needed to bring their work to the expanding marketplace.

Students are required to complete a minimum of 66 credit hours. At least 24 of these credit hours must be at or above the 700-level. At least 12 credit hours must be earned at the 800-level for thesis work. Motion Picture students must maintain an overall minimum GPA of 3.0 or above for all courses. By the end of the second year, students are required to achieve a minimum 3.0 score on the program's film and television literacy test.

Students in the Motion Picture program are strongly encouraged to explore not only a primary but also a secondary area of specialization and develop a minimum of 2 creative projects in consultation with their faculty advisory committee. The 3 year program culminates in a thesis portfolio. Students need to work closely with their primary advisor and committee to ensure they are fulfilling their degree expectations, which typically include a short motion picture project abroad and a summer internship.

Documentary (M.F.A.)

The Documentary MFA program at the University of Miami Offers a dynamic, hands-on approach to nonfiction storytelling, blending creative vision with the rigor of journalistic practice. Designed for aspiring documentary filmmakers, the program immerses students in every stage of the filmmaking process - from concept development and detailed pre-visualization to production, post-production, and strategic exhibition.

Collaboration is at the heart of the program, fostering an environment where students refine their craft through teamwork, mentorship, and real-world experience. Success is measured not only by technical and artistic achievement but also by securing grants and premiering work at prestigious festivals and other notable venues.

A distinguishing feature of the program is its **global documentary production component in Latin America**. Through this immersive service-learning course, students partner with grassroots organizations, spending a semester developing a project and a week on location for filming before completing their documentaries in post-production. This international experience equips students with invaluable cross-cultural storytelling skills and professional exposure.

Beyond production, students engage deeply in **documentary research and impact strategy**, learning to craft narratives that inspire change. The curriculum encourages a **multidisciplinary approach**, allowing students to explore electives across the University of Miami and broaden their creative and technical expertise.

Bridging academia and the industry, the program provides networking opportunities through **internships, documentary conferences, and industry events**, ensuring students graduate with strong professional connections. While the program emphasizes **social impact storytelling**, its comprehensive training prepares students for diverse careers in the expanding documentary field, from cinematography and editing to producing and media strategy.

By the end of the program, graduates emerge as skilled, socially engaged filmmakers ready to create compelling documentaries that inform, challenge, and inspire audiences worldwide.

Students must complete a minimum of 54 credit hours with the supervision of the faculty advisor. A minimum of 9 credit hours must be at or above the 700-level. M.F.A. students must maintain an overall minimum GPA of 3.0 for all courses. All successful students complete their own thesis film as a requirement for the degree.

Masters Programs in Cinema

- M.F.A. in Motion Pictures (<https://bulletin.miami.edu/graduate-academic-programs/communication/cinematic-arts/motion-pictures-mfa/>)
- M.F.A. in Documentary (<https://bulletin.miami.edu/graduate-academic-programs/communication/cinematic-arts/documentary-mfa/>)

CCA 601. Principles of Aesthetics and Analysis. 3 Credit Hours.

Provides graduate students with introductory immersion in aesthetics, analysis, and history of film and media.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall.

CCA 602. Global Issues and Filmmaking. 3 Credit Hours.

A trans-disciplinary approach to study and analyze a variety of complex global Issues such as climate change, human security, globalization, and rise of nationalism while gaining hands-on experience to develop short analytical documentary films about such topics. Prior film-making experience is NOT required.

Components: HRK.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

CCA 603. Film Directors. 3 Credit Hours.

This course will address the conditions of authorship in film through an intensive study of the films of two or more directors, whose careers will serve as case studies. These directors will be historically important and their work will represent significant achievements in the art of film.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall.

CCA 604. Aspects of Contemporary Cinema. 3 Credit Hours.

The study of the ways in which film communicates. Intensive analysis and criticism of cinematic techniques exemplified through particular films.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

CCA 606. Genres. 3 Credit Hours.

A study of selected movie genres from a variety of critical perspectives. Issues pertaining to selfhood, sexual difference, and other concerns of present-day film criticism will be examined.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall.

CCA 608. National Cinemas. 3 Credit Hours.

Selected films from Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America will be studied in relation to their diverse social/political and cultural contexts.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall & Summer.

CCA 609. Legal Aspects of Motion Pictures. 3 Credit Hours.

The law, contracts, and negotiating techniques of the business affairs aspects of the production of motion pictures.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

CCA 610. Foundation of Screenwriting. 3 Credit Hours.

This course explores the fundamental skill set necessary to manipulate the basic elements of cinematic writing. The course will investigate common dramatic elements found in all screenplays as well as teach format principles of feature, TV and emerging media scripts.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

CCA 611. Writing the Short Film. 3 Credit Hours.

Students write a 15 – 30 page script suitable for an MFA project, focusing on concept, content, story structure and character development.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall.

CCA 612. Write for TV. 3 Credit Hours.

The course will explore the art and craft required to write a "spec" Television episode. The course will explore how TV writing differs from feature writing and how the TV writer/producer business model works. By the end of the course the student will have finished an hour-long "spec" script for an existing TV show or a two-part sitcom teleplay.

Pre-Requisite: CCA 610 or CCA 611.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

CCA 613. Race and/as Media. 3 Credit Hours.

This class critically examines how screen and audio-visual media (including film, video, television, radio, internet) mediate race and ethnicity and how race and ethnicity mediate screen and audio-visual media with a primary focus on materials produced in the United States. Using humanities approaches including historical inquiry, cultural interpretation, first-person essay, primary source research, and close textual analysis, topics will focus on representations and debates within mainstream cinema, art, and/or alternative media.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

CCA 614. Blackness and American Television. 3 Credit Hours.

Examines the sites of production, reception, representation, and industry as related to black televisual images from the 1950s to today.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

CCA 617. Queer Media Studies. 3 Credit Hours.

Examines the history and development of U.S. LGBT media by focusing on media production, sociocultural context, media reception, texts.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall.

CCA 618. Seminar in Documentary Film History: Cinéma-vérité. 3 Credit Hours.

The primary focus of this course will be on the half-century old school or tradition of documentary filmmaking associated with the terms "Cinéma-vérité" and "direct cinema". Through close analysis of selected classic and contemporary documentaries, the class will explore their historical significance, their aspirations and achievements as films, and their ways of addressing the aesthetic, epistemological, political and moral issues that inevitably arise when filmmakers take their sync-sound camera into the world and undertake to film life as it is really lived.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

CCA 619. Seminar in Documentary Production. 3 Credit Hours.

The Seminar in Documentary Production is an advanced documentary class for SoC students who want to polish an existing project or develop a new project based on a detailed proposal.

Requisite: Graduate Standing.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall.

CCA 620. Cinematography. 3 Credit Hours.

This hands-on course provides students with the aesthetic and technical aspects of professional concepts and techniques in film and digital media cinematography.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall.

CCA 621. Narrative Production. 3 Credit Hours.

An introduction to film and digital production techniques for narrative projects. Students will develop an awareness of group process and social purpose as they produce a short film.

Components: WKS.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall & Spring.

CCA 622. Writing for the Screen through Editing. 3 Credit Hours.

Taught in collaboration by a screenwriter and a screen editor, this course advances students' understanding of the unique structure of narrative for documentary and other non-fiction forms through the simultaneous exploration of screenwriting and screen editing.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

CCA 623. Advanced 3D Character Design. 3 Credit Hours.

This course covers the 3D game art development pipeline from modeling, texturing, rigging and animation to motion capture, and special effects.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

CCA 626. Adaptation. 3 Credit Hours.

This course will examine the craft and techniques of adapting sources such as novels, short stories, plays, articles comic books, and public domain material such as Shakespeare to the screen.

Prerequisite: CCA 610 or CCA 611.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

CCA 629. Nonfiction Film. 3 Credit Hours.

An examination of American and world nonfiction films.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall.

CCA 630. Introduction to Editing. 3 Credit Hours.

Introduction to the theory and practice of motion picture editing. Short editing assignments are designed to develop students' understanding of aesthetic, and technical considerations in the art of dramatic editing.

Components: WKS.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

CCA 632. Production and Location Sound Recording. 3 Credit Hours.

This course provides students with in-depth exploration into the use of creative sound recording techniques and post-production sound design. Students acquire the skills necessary to utilize audio equipment effectively in production and especially on location while advancing their understanding of the post-production sound process.

Components: WKS.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall & Spring.

CCA 640. Global Black Film. 3 Credit Hours.

Global Black Film explores international histories of cinema and media, with a particular focus on the pioneering cinematic innovations by people of African descent from the late nineteenth century to the present. This course approaches the practice of Black film, including the production and conceptual work of directors, performers, writers, and more, as part of a global, multi-locational system of circulation, citation, imagination, and exchange.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

CCA 652. Producing Experimental Media. 3 Credit Hours.

Lectures and screenings will acquaint the student with the historical, technical and aesthetic context within which the experimental media have developed, as well as the complex variations of genre and style which characterize it providing models, concepts and techniques that will inform the production process as students develop their projects.

Components: WKS.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

CCA 655. Science Documentary: Autism. 3 Credit Hours.

Students will be exposed to both the history and cutting-edge research surrounding autism spectrum disorder. Students will connect with people in the local community – to lend these issues a face and context. This course brings together student citizens across science, communication, and education to collaborate on content intended to reach audiences on multiple platforms.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall.

CCA 658. Documentary Production. 3 Credit Hours.

Students produce two short digital documentaries and explore various narrative approaches to the documentary film.

Requisite: Graduate Standing.

Components: WKS.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall & Spring.

CCA 660. Directing the Actor. 3 Credit Hours.

Students learn to direct (including text analysis, characterization, visualization, design, intention, and rehearsal.) As a crucial part of this process, students will learn methods to articulate their ideas to actors and film crew.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall.

CCA 666. Character and Dialogue. 3 Credit Hours.

An examination of the craft and techniques of creating original characters and dialogue.

Prerequisite: CCA 610.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall.

CCA 670. The Independent Producer. 3 Credit Hours.

Beyond covering the role of the producer, this hands-on class offers students a place to workshop their thesis projects. Students will brand themselves or their company and leave with a packaged project ready to take to market.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

CCA 680. Inside the Entertainment Industry. 3 Credit Hours.

This course is designed to give a creative and business overview across the wide range of careers that exist in the modern, studio-based and independent entertainment industry via weekly seminars led by invited professionals, project workshops, and presentations.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall.

CCA 686. Online Writing the Genre Script. 3 Credit Hours.

Students will prepare and complete the first act of a feature-length screenplay or will commence the re-write of an existing screenplay. This is an asynchronous self-directed course.

Pre-Requisite: CCA 610.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, & Summer.

CCA 694. Motion Picture Marketing and Distribution. 3 Credit Hours.

Economic and marketing considerations in the production and distribution of motion pictures.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall & Spring.

CCA 695. Advanced Motion Picture Marketing and Distribution. 3 Credit Hours.

Advanced marketing considerations in the distribution of motion pictures.

Prerequisite: CCA 694.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

CCA 696. Directing Techniques II. 3 Credit Hours.

To build a more advanced set of professional skills and practices through scene work, shooting, and collaboration.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

CCA 697. Topics in Film Analysis. 3 Credit Hours.

Content varies by semester. Topics such as Film Directors, National Cinemas, Silent Film, Contemporary Cinema. Course may be repeated for credit if content varies.

Requisite: Graduate Standing.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

CCA 707. Pedagogy and Film. 3 Credit Hours.

This course covers a range of traditions in pedagogy, including history, theory, and practical applications. Intended for those who are currently teaching—or who intend to teach—at the college level, the course provides grounding in foundational approaches as well as a familiarity with recent research advancements in pedagogy.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall.

CCA 710. Writing the Feature-Length Screenplay. 3 Credit Hours.

Study of and practice in writing feature-length, narrative motion picture scripts. Focus is placed on cinematic structure and presentation of character. Classes will generally be conducted as follows: a discussion of screenplay craft, an in-depth analysis of various films from the writer's POV, and a critique of the various stages of your fellow student screenplays as they evolve throughout the semester.

Prerequisite: CCA 610.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall.

CCA 727. Scriptwriting. 3 Credit Hours.

Study of and practice in writing feature-length, narrative motion picture scripts. Focus is placed on cinematic structure and presentation of character.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall & Spring.

CCA 730. Advanced Editing. 3 Credit Hours.

An examination of the art and techniques of post-production designed for students completing advanced motion picture projects. Lectures, group discussions and screenings. Emphasis on rhythm, dramatic moments, character arcs, symbolic vs. thematic editing, elements of sound editing, sound design, and professional mastering standards. This class is designed to develop editorial skills that will prepare students for professional careers in editing. In-depth examination of effects and sound palettes of the Avid Media Composer, as well as a discussion of how to integrate visual effects from external applications. Finishing and mastering techniques for a variety of mediums as well as a reel building will be covered.

Prerequisite: CCA 630.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

CCA 740. Sound Design. 3 Credit Hours.

Sound Design, taught as both a seminar and a workshop, provides a practical and theoretical introduction to sound and its function in the narrative moving image process. The course utilizes professional environments in which to instruct the basics of sound editing, studio recording and mixing, as practiced in the film industry.

Components: WKS.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall & Spring.

CCA 750. From Script to Screen. 3 Credit Hours.

Advanced production concepts and techniques explored in a variety of media. Students will produce an approved film or script. The class will explore the language of motion picture and how this language is utilized in the story telling process. Knowledge of both the practical and aesthetic aspects of film will be stressed at all times.

Pre-Requisite: CCA 610 or CCA 611.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

CCA 752. Advanced Cinematography. 3 Credit Hours.

Advanced technical and photographic principles begun in CMP 651. Preparation for the filming of the MFA project film.

Prerequisite: CCA 620.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall.

CCA 761. Directing the Camera. 3 Credit Hours.

An introduction to directing actors in low budget, independent films utilizing traditional, modern and evolving directorial techniques used by independent and traditional film makers: analyzing and orchestrating scripted material, developing a directorial concept, creating indelible characterizations, building a visual image, auditioning and casting the talent, blocking and directing the untrained amateur or highly skilled professional actor.

Components: WKS.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

CCA 794. Motion Picture Internship. 1-3 Credit Hours.

Prescribed study and supervised work with practitioners in motion pictures.

Components: THI.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, & Summer.

CCA 795. Special Topics in Motion Pictures. 3 Credit Hours.

This course subject matter varies according to announced special topic. See class schedule for details.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, & Summer.

CCA 799. Advanced Projects and Directed Research. 1-3 Credit Hours.

Independent Studies are voluntary agreements between individual faculty members and individual students, in which students complete original creative work or directed research. Since, Independent Study is intended to expand a student's work beyond the regular curriculum, it may not be used to duplicate course offerings. In order to register for the course, students must seek the agreement of a faculty mentor, complete the Independent Study Contract, and secure the approval of the Department Chair prior to enrolling. In order to receive a grade for this course, students must submit all the required materials to their faculty mentors by the last official day of classes in the semester in which they are enrolled. Faculty mentors must submit their grade to the Department Chair by the last official day of the semester in which the student enrolled.

Components: IND.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, & Summer.

CCA 815. MFA Thesis. 1-6 Credit Hours.

The focus is on completing the culminating thesis project, in consultation with the student's selected committee and thesis chair.

Components: THI.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, & Summer.