

# M.F.A. DOCUMENTARY

## Overview

The Department of Cinematic Arts and the Department of Journalism and Media Management offer a 54-credit, two-year, MFA degree in Documentary. This interdisciplinary degree provides students with advanced skills in non-fiction creative storytelling and knowledge in documentary production and distribution delivered across a range of platforms.

Building on the School of Communication's strengths in both cinematic and journalistic documentary, the Documentary program distinguishes itself by crossing disciplines and promoting experimentation with the goal of producing forms that best serve story content. Students will be exposed to a variety of documentary styles, including observational, expository, reflexive, performative, participatory, and poetic (e.g., impressionistic, associative, or affective modes). As students are immersed in a wide range of approaches, they deepen their understanding of the social responsibility of the storyteller and the standards and ethics of journalism.

Anchoring the first year of studies in the *International Production Outreach Program*, a one-week, service-learning experience abroad involving student travel and production in the spring semester. The program culminates with the creation of a thesis project that casts light on under-represented issues or topics of social relevance in ways that are visceral and impactful.

The curriculum is designed to balance documentary film with journalism and encourages students to focus on one of any array of academic disciplines found at the University in order to better understand and communicate through documentary. The M.F.A. in Documentary provides a coherent structure along with the flexibility to achieve personal freedom of expression.

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.

## Admission Requirements

The following is a list of the required conditions as well as the required documents/fees for your application for admission to the Master of Fine Arts degree program in Documentary in the School of Communication.

- A baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution.
- The School's official application.
- An \$85.00 non-refundable application fee.
- Three letters of recommendation.
- 500-word typed statement of academic and professional goals.
- Official transcripts of all college work, both undergraduate and graduate.
  - Note: In addition, international applicants must send an official copy of their diploma for all degrees earned, and all documentation that confers their degree, with English translation for all degrees earned.
  - Note: All transcripts must be the original document, forwarded directly from the university. Xerox copies, true copies, notarized copies and other types of copies are not acceptable.
- Official TOEFL or IELTS scores.
  - Note: Only for international applicants.
- Copy of current passport.
  - Note: Only for international applicants. The name entered on the graduate application must exactly match your name as it appears on your passport.
- Portfolio (optional).

Contact the Office of Graduate Studies, call 305-284-5236 or email ([socgrad@miami.edu](mailto:socgrad@miami.edu)), for information.

## Curriculum Requirements

Code	Title	Credit Hours
<b>Required Coursework</b>		
JMM 628	Seminar in Visual Storytelling	3
JMM 614	Law and Ethics in Journalism and Media Management	3
JMM 641	Advanced Audio Video Narratives	3
JMM 670	Public Affairs Research and Reporting	3
JMM 692	Special Topics in Journalism and Media Management (Advanced Documentary Photography)	3
CCA 619	Seminar in Documentary Production	3
CCA 622	Writing for the Screen through Editing	3

CCA 629	Nonfiction Film (Studies in Documentary)	3
CCA 658	Documentary Production (Cinematic Documentary Production)	3
CCA 670	The Independent Producer	3
Select one course from:		3
CCA 620	Cinematography	
CCA 630	Introduction to Editing	
<b>Electives (9 credits) <sup>1</sup></b>		
<b>Choose at least 3 credits from CCA, JMM, or CIM departments from the list below. <sup>2</sup></b>		<b>3-6</b>
<b>CCA</b>		
CCA 602	Global Issues and Filmmaking	
CCA 620	Cinematography	
CCA 630	Introduction to Editing	
CCA 632	Production and Location Sound Recording	
CCA 655	Science Documentary: Autism	
CCA 752	Advanced Cinematography	
CCA 730	Advanced Editing	
CCA 740	Sound Design	
<b>JMM</b>		
JMM 617	Television News Reporting	
JMM 620	Reporting and the Internet	
JMM 619	Interactive Storytelling	
JMM 646	Travel Writing	
<b>CIM</b>		
CIM 623	Building Virtual Worlds	
CIM 633	Augmented Reality	
CIM 658	Immersive Storytelling	
CIM 602	Innovation Design	
CIM 618	Internet and Media Activism	
CIM 601	Prototyping	
<b>Choose three to six credits elective from outside of SoC (course by approval) <sup>2</sup></b>		<b>3-6</b>
(Examples include Africana Studies, Anthropology, Education, Latin American Studies, Marine Science, Nursing and Health Sciences, Psychology, Sociology, History, Gender and Sexuality Studies.)		
<b>Practicum</b>		<b>6</b>
Choose one of the combinations below:		
CCA 794 & JMM 609	Motion Picture Internship and Internship in Journalism and Media Management	
CCA 799 & JMM 699	Advanced Projects and Directed Research and Advanced Projects and Directed Research	
<b>Non-ETD Thesis or Project</b>		<b>6</b>
CCA 815	MFA Thesis	
JMM 815	Multimedia Project	
<b>Total Credit Hours</b>		<b>54</b>

<sup>1</sup> No elective from above list may be repeated.

<sup>2</sup> Though encouraged to take these electives outside the School of Communication, a student has the option to fulfill one or more of these electives within the the SoC, pending approval of advisor and program director.

## Sample Plan of Study

Year One		Credit Hours
<b>Fall</b>		
JMM 628	Seminar in Visual Storytelling	3
JMM 692	Special Topics in Journalism and Media Management (Advanced Documentary Photography)	3

CCA 629	Nonfiction Film (Studies in Documentary)	3
CCA 658	Documentary Production (Cinematic Documentary Production I)	3
<b>Credit Hours</b>		<b>12</b>
<b>Spring</b>		
JMM 641	Advanced Audio Video Narratives	3
JMM 670	Public Affairs Research and Reporting	3
CCA 622	Writing for the Screen through Editing	3
CCA Elective (e.g., CCA 620 Cinematography; CCA 630 Introduction to Editing, CCA 632 Production and Location Sound Recording)		3
<b>Credit Hours</b>		<b>12</b>
<b>Summer</b>		
CCA 794 & CCA 609	Motion Picture Internship and Legal Aspects of Motion Pictures (Or CCA 799 & JMM 699)	6
<b>Credit Hours</b>		<b>6</b>
<b>Year Two</b>		
<b>Fall</b>		
CCA 619	Seminar in Documentary Production	3
CCA 670	The Independent Producer	3
SoC Elective		3
SoC Elective or outside SoC Elective		3
<b>Credit Hours</b>		<b>12</b>
<b>Spring</b>		
JMM 614	Law and Ethics in Journalism and Media Management	3
3rd Elective (Outside SoC) <sup>1</sup>		3
CCA 815 or JMM 815	MFA Thesis or Multimedia Project	6
<b>Credit Hours</b>		<b>12</b>
<b>Total Credit Hours</b>		<b>54</b>

<sup>1</sup> Though encouraged to take these electives outside the School of Communication, a student has the option to fulfill one or more of these electives within the SoC, pending approval of advisor and program director.

## Mission

There is great urgency to make sense of and accurately communicate the state of our world, to illuminate and explain humanity's most pressing challenges: climate change, environmental degradation, poverty, health care, immigration, gender and racial equality, human rights, and the sustainability of cities and communities. Students are increasingly drawn to documentary as a form of communicating powerful stories while addressing concerns that they care most deeply about. The documentary is a powerful medium that broadens horizons, introduces new ideas, inspires questioning and critical thinking, and takes viewers to unusual places. It has the capacity to transform lives and move people to action for the social good.

By virtue of its commitment to community engagement and distinctive location, the University of Miami is well positioned to offer an interdisciplinary graduate documentary program. This is an ideal home to nurture the next generation of visual storytellers. The aspirations and priorities identified by the University, ranging from environmental sustainability to health care to hemispheric activities, will naturally attract those pursuing a documentary degree.

The MFA in Documentary directly supports the University of Miami's mission to "strive to transform the world in positive ways through innovative education, impactful research and scholarship, and the translation of knowledge into solutions." It reinforces our core commitment to the "freedom of inquiry-the freedom to think, to question, to criticize, and to dissent."

## Goals

- Deliver a comprehensive graduate educational experience in Documentary, grounded in a journalistic framework, and provide skills in advanced research and production techniques.
- Prepare students to enter a rapidly changing business and distribution marketplace for documentary content in many forms and over multiple platforms.

## **Student Learning Outcomes**

- Students will demonstrate a depth of knowledge in the legal, historical, theoretical, ethical, and aesthetic dimensions of documentary.
- Students will understand and display mastery of advanced research skills and video production techniques.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the marketplace for documentary distribution.
- Students will be able to apply skills, strategies and processes critical to both traditional and independent production: self-distribution, creative packaging and promotion, and incorporating an entrepreneurial orientation.