MFA in Film

Southampton Graduate Arts

**Associate Provost:** Robert Reeves, (631) 632-5028

**Artistic Director:** Christine Vachon, Manhattan Facility (646) 472-2025

**Director:** Magdalene Brandeis, Chancellors Hall (631) 632-5010

**Degree Awarded:** M.F.A. in Film

**Web Site:** [http://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/film](http://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/film)

**Application**
[https://app.applyyourself.com/AYApplicantLogin/fl_ApplicantLogin.asp?id=sunysb-gs](https://app.applyyourself.com/AYApplicantLogin/fl_ApplicantLogin.asp?id=sunysb-gs)

**MFA in Film**

The MFA in Film is a two plus year program that includes a core curriculum in screenwriting, TV Writing, directing and producing, with production periods culminating in a feature screenplay, a 20-minute MFA thesis film, a television writer’s portfolio, or a feature producer’s package. Faculty Christine Vachon, Pamela Koffler, Alan Kingsburg, Magdalene Brandeis, Mercedes Ruehl, Jennie Allen, Lenny Crooks, Simone Pero, David Hinojosa, Karen Offitzer, and Jordan Roberts, along with top industry professionals, guide participants through the essential elements of independent film production and TV Writing. Hands-on, experiential, in-depth, project driven.

The curriculum requires 45-48 credits.

Interested students should request information from the department and find application information at [http://www.stonybrook.edu/southampton/mfa/film/admissions.html](http://www.stonybrook.edu/southampton/mfa/film/admissions.html)

Students are encouraged to apply as early as possible, especially if they plan to apply for financial aid.

**Admission to the MFA Program in Film**

This MFA program in Film is intensive and admission to it is highly selective. Upon review, finalists are invited for an interview. For admission, the following, in addition to the minimum Graduate School requirements, are normally required:

1. A bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university.
2. Undergraduate grade point average of at least 3.0.
3. Three letters of recommendation.
4. A current résumé
5. A **statement of purpose.** Describe in a page or two why you are interested in this opportunity, how you would benefit, and what makes you a particularly deserving candidate.
6. **Your specialization:** Screenwriter/TV Writer/Director/Producer/Documentarian
7. **Videos.** (Urls for all video links may be uploaded in the Qualifications sections)
8. **All candidates:** The **Video Pitch. This is one of the more important elements to your application.** You have probably seen people pitching for donations on a crowdsourcing site. In this case, you can pitch to us anything you want: yourself as a candidate, a project you want to work on, or something else that is exciting to you. The video pitch should be creative, polished, inventive. We want you to win us over here! SUGGESTED LENGTH: 3 MINUTES
9. **Directing candidates only (not required for Screenwriting, TV Writing, or Producing candidates):** Please include a link (or links) to up to 4 video samples of work to which you made a significant contribution. Be clear about what role you played: producer, writer, director, editor, production designer, cinematographer, etc. You may submit links for more than one piece but the total running time should not exceed 15 minutes. If you submit an excerpt, please describe the full work. Unless you are applying as a cinematographer or production designer, the entirety of your video sample should not be in the format of a professional reel but should also show us the substance of your work. (A reel might accompany another sample). In lieu of video, you may submit up to ten photographs, design samples, or photographs of your artwork.
10. **Written materials:** *(All written materials may be uploaded in the Additional Supplemental Materials section)*

Your written material should include:

1. **All Candidates:** The **Scene.** Write a short, 2-3-page scene inspired by and using one of these words that have no English language translation. We prefer a scene with two characters where one character wants something from the other.
   - Glas wen (Welsh)
A smile that is insincere or mocking. Literally, a blue smile.

- Yuputka (Ulwa)
  The phantom sensation of something crawling on your skin.
- Iktsuarpoq (Inuit)
  You know that feeling of anticipation when you’re waiting for someone to show up at your house and you keep going outside to see if they’re there yet? This is the word for it.

2. **All Candidates: The Logline.** Write an extended log line or a paragraph describing a project you’d like to realize with us.

3. **Screenwriting, TV Writing, and Directing Candidates: The Writing Sample.** Please include a writing sample of up to 10 pages. This can be a complete short film, web episode, play, short story, or an excerpt of a feature screenplay, a TV Script, a webisode, a sketch or series of sketches. If you choose to submit an excerpt, please include a few lines describing the full work.

4. **Producing Candidates: The Writing Sample.** Please include a writing sample of up to 10 pages, including, critiques, production program notes, and/or literary criticism of a chosen screenplay, excerpts of a film or screenplay you have written, acquired or produced; or a brief statement describing your view of the role of Producing in today’s platform agnostic film industry.

9. Proficiencies. Directing Candidates Only

Please include a list of technical proficiencies in: camera, lighting, editing, and any related skills.

10. Acceptance by both the MFA in Film program and the Graduate School.

Any deficiencies in these or the Graduate School admission requirements shall not automatically bar admission, but it is understood that inadequacies in undergraduate preparation normally will require the student to take additional work, the amount to be determined by the appropriate graduate advisory committee. Additional work may not be used to fulfill MFA degree requirements.

Eligibility

Applicants to the Master of Fine Arts program must have a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university and, except in special circumstances, have earned a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 on a 4-point scale. It’s fine to have an undergraduate degree in an area outside of the arts and humanities. A candidate with outstanding promise in film but a less-than-stellar academic transcript may be admitted on a conditional basis.

Transfer Credit

The program permits the transfer of up to 12 hours of credit in suitable graduate work done elsewhere that resulted in a grade of B or better. To obtain transfer credit, the student must make special application to the program, submit official transcripts and provide course descriptions or syllabi. Transfer credits are only approved at the discretion of the academic department and the Graduate School. Courses older than five years will be accepted only in rare circumstances. No courses that have been credited toward another degree, such as an MA or an MFA in a different field, can be transferred. Transfer credit request forms are available on the Graduate School website.

Facilities

The MFA in Film is located at our Manhattan Facility at 535 8th Avenue, and in the Carriage House on the Stony Brook Southampton campus, which includes the Avram Theater and Gallery, a 429-seat theater that was substantially renovated in 2007. The program features an impressive range of industry standard camera, light, grip and sound equipment. Highlights include include the RED Epic-W, Canon C100 MKII, Canon XC10, Canon 5D and 7D, Panasonic HMC150P, Go Pro Hero 4, Canon Cine Prime Lenses, Zooms, Kino Flos, ARRI 4 and 3 Light Kits, Lite Panels, Dedos, Tascam Field Recorders, RODE, AT and Sennheiser Shotguns, Countryman Lavs, Kessler Slider, and several one ton grip packages. Our post-production offerings include 27” iMacs equipped with Adobe Creative Cloud, AVID Media Composer and Pro Tools. The University Library holds in excess of 15,000 items comprised of books, eBooks, videos, periodicals, music scores, dissertations, and audio files related to the study of film, which are easily accessible through interlibrary document delivery. Our book collection contains over 7,500 volumes.

Degree Requirements

The MFA in Film requires a minimum of 45 credits. In addition to the minimum Graduate School requirements, the following are required:

**A. Required Core Courses (27-28 Credits)**

- FLM 500 Introduction to Graduate Studies, 4 cr.
- FLM 510 Western Theatre & Literature I, 3 cr.
- FLM 523 Theatre in New York, 3 cr.
- FLM 525 Topics in Theatre, 3 cr.
- FLM 576 Theatre Workshop (Summer), 2 cr.
- FLM 576 Theatre Workshop (Academic Year), 2-3 cr.
FLM 591 Independent Project, 3 cr.
FLM 660 Acting, 3 cr.
CWL 530 Forms of Scriptwriting: Screenwriting, 4 cr.

**B. One of the following Literature Courses (3 Credits)**
FLM 520 Western Theatre & Literature II, 3 cr.
FLM 530 Directed Readings in Theatre, 3 cr.

**C. One of the following Writing/Performance Workshops (3-4 Credits)**
CWL 510 Forms of Fiction, 4 cr.
CWL 520 Forms of Poetry, 4 cr.
CWL 530 Forms of Scriptwriting, 4 cr.
FLM 575 Adaptation Workshop, 3 cr.
FLM 640 Scenography and New Media, 3 cr.

**D. One of the following Interdisciplinary Options (3-4 Credits)**
With the approval of the Film Program director, select an interdisciplinary study option chosen from any FLM, TAF, CWL, or other SBU graduate course.

**E. One or more of the following practicums (3 credits)**
FLM 550 Practicum in Teaching, 3 cr.
FLM 690 Professional Internship, 3 cr.

**F. MFA Thesis Project and Paper (6 credits)**
FLM 691 MFA Project, 3 cr.
FLM 692 Thesis, 3 cr.

**G. Residence Requirement**
This program is normally completed in three years of full-time residency. Three credits must include Southampton residency, FLM 660 Acting for Directors, (or course substitution, pending approval from Director).

**University Requirements**
The granting of master’s degree is based upon the completion of any special departmental requirements in addition to the items listed below:

**A. Courses and Grade Point Average**
A student must maintain a 3.0 overall grade point average

**B. Registration**
Degree candidates must be registered in the program granting their degree. Students must be registered for the semester in which they intend to graduate. Spring (May) and Fall (December) candidates must register for at least one graduate credit; Summer (August) candidates may register for zero credits in either summer session, but it still must be graduate level.

**C. Time Limits**
The time limit for the MFA is three years for full-time study and five years for part-time study. A student’s full- or part-time status is based on registration, and the time-limit may be modified if enrollment switches between part- and full-time. The student may petition for an extension of time limit for the degree. Such requests must be filed before the limit is exceeded and must contain a significant justification.

**Faculty of the MFA in Film Program**

**Associate Professor**
Visiting Professor
Vachon, Christine, Artistic Director. B.A., 1983, Brown University
Feiffer, Jules. The Pratt Institute: Humor and Truth, Screenplay
Gabler, Neal. A.M., 1974, University of Michigan, Creative Nonfiction, Biography, Essay
Handley Chandler, Annette. B.A. 1969 C.W. Post College

Visiting Assistant Professor
Brandeis, Magdalene, Director. M.F.A., 2008, Stony Brook University
Koffler, Pamela. B.A., 1987, Yale University
Pero, Simone. MPP, 1994, University at Albany
Ruehl, Mercedes. B.A. College of New Rochelle, Academy Award Winning Actress
Hinojosa, David. B.A. 2009, Boston University.

Lecturer
Offitzer, Karen. M.F.A. University of Arizona, M.A. NYU.
Roberts, Jordan. MFA, 2009. New York Film Academy

NOTE: The course descriptions for this program can be found in the corresponding program PDF or at COURSE SEARCH.