



TFM MFA in Television, Film and New Media Curriculum

You will find that the TFM Program offers a great deal of elective flexibility. Among the 54 units you must take to earn the Master of Fine Arts Degree, only seven courses are required: **TFM 601, TFM 605, TFM 610, TFM 625, TFM 670, TFM 675, and TFM 790**. As you progress through the required 54 course units, many elective options will become available to you. Most students take between two and four courses per semester, depending on intensity of production load (and other life situations). Not every course is offered every semester, or even every year, so please look ahead, talk with your MFA cohort and the cohorts above you, and plan accordingly. Your Graduate Advisor will perform a Degree Audit with you prior to your final year, to help you make up any missing courses or units and help you graduate on time.

MFA FIRST YEAR

SEMESTER ONE

Each graduate student is required to begin the fall semester with two seminar classes: **TFM 605 and TFM 625**. In addition, each student will take one or two electives - typically one critical studies elective and possibly one additional production elective, for a total load of up to 12 units.

TFM 605 - Seminar in Production for TV and Film (required Fall semester): This is an intensive and hands-on weekly seminar designed to introduce production techniques, build upon existing skills, foster collaborative practices, and integrate new graduate students into the MFA production program. Through a series of collaborative and individual assignments, students will employ a wide range of cinematic techniques to tell stories, increase knowledge of technical production, and practice industry professionalism.

TFM 625 - Seminar in Writing Short Fiction (required Fall semester): The primary purpose of the seminar is to address the process of screenwriting. The seminar will cover both fictional narrative screenwriting and documentary screenwriting. The goal of the seminar is to complete a viable short film screenplay (fiction or documentary) that you will

put into production in TFM 670 for your Midway Review Project. Your screenwriting will be subjected to frequent and comprehensive critiques by the instructor and by the seminar participants. More than write your screenplay, you will effectively rewrite it until it is deemed ready for production.

Electives: Students will take up to two elective courses in their first semester. Most typical is one critical studies course and one additional production course. *However, please keep in mind that recent students have recommended a maximum of three courses this first semester, as it is intense, especially for anyone relocating to the San Diego area from out of city, state, or country.*

SEMESTER TWO

This semester will serve to allow students to prepare for their Midway film production in the Fall of their second year.

Students intending to make a documentary or nonfiction film for their TFM 670 Midway production will be required to take **TFM 540 - Documentary Production**.

All other students will use this time to take electives in areas requiring more support (cinematography, directing, writing, editing, sound), to further integrate into the larger TFM community including the undergraduate film student community, and to begin the steps of pre-production for your Midway film including script polishing, scheduling and budgeting, fundraising, casting, location scouting, gathering crew and equipment, etc.).

Electives: Students will take four elective courses in their second semester.

MFA SECOND YEAR

SEMESTER ONE

TFM 670 Seminar - Midway Review Production (required Fall semester). In this class, you will complete your Midway Review Project which will be presented to a jury of TFM faculty. The Midway Review is the first big hurdle each graduate student must jump over on their way to the Master of Fine Arts Degree. It is analogous to the qualifying exam in a Ph.D. program in that you must pass the review before you can qualify for the capstone project. The Midway Review takes place at the end of the Fall semester in TFM 670. A committee of TFM faculty will review the projects and make recommendations. Each student will be given an appraisal of his or her Midway Review work with advice and recommendations. Students who do not pass this review will have one more chance to bring up the quality of their work to passing standards. If you pass the Midway review, you will be eligible to move on to thesis development.

Electives: Students will take up to two electives in their Midway semester. Be mindful as you select your courses that this is a production-intensive semester.

SEMESTER TWO

TFM 610 - Seminar in Writing for Television and Film (required Spring semester).

This seminar will continue to develop the writing skills of the student, with the goal of developing a solid script that will be the basis of the thesis project.

TFM 675 Seminar: Thesis Development (required Spring semester). Once you have passed your Midway Review and the aforementioned seminars, you become eligible to propose a thesis project to the TFM faculty. This requires one more course, TFM 675, Thesis Project Proposal. The thesis proposal follows a prescribed format. The class offers a detailed template for the proposal which reflects the creative preparation a filmmaker or screenwriter engages in at the initial stages of production: A conceptual framework is proposed, film and literary sources are identified for research, a script or treatment is generated along with a production plan, schedule and budget, and a method of approach is specified. You will identify a TFM instructor to be your faculty supervisor on the project. If you pass the Thesis Proposal class with a B or better, the Graduate Advisor will recommend you for Advancement to Candidacy. All TFM thesis projects follow the Plan B thesis model, where the student will create a major portfolio project that will serve as a capstone experience and comprehensive examination.

Electives: Students will take two additional electives this semester.

MFA THIRD YEAR

SEMESTER ONE

TFM 790 - Portfolio/Examination Preparation (required Fall semester). This class is devoted to the production of the actual thesis project. In close consultation with your thesis advisor you will pre-produce and shoot the project you developed in TFM 675.

Electives: Students will take up to three additional electives this semester.

SEMESTER TWO

TFM 790 - Portfolio/Examination Preparation (required Spring semester). This second session of 790 is devoted to the post-production of the thesis project. In close consultation with your faculty supervisor you finish and prepare for the screening of your film or presentation of your capstone project.

Your third year will end with the presentation of your capstone project to a jury of TFM faculty. With the approval of your faculty supervisor, you will schedule a screening or presentation of your project to a jury made of up 3 TFM faculty, and other members of your class and the department. You will offer an introduction of your project, and then provide an oral defense after the presentation. With the jury's approval you will have finished the program requirements, and will be awarded the M.F.A. degree.

Electives: Students will take up to three additional electives this semester.

Category	Course	Units	Required
Core Preparation	TFM 601 - Business Aspects of Film	3	Yes
Core Preparation	TFM 605 - Seminar: Production for Television and Film	3	Yes
Core Preparation	TFM 610 - Seminar in Writing for Television and Film	3	Yes
Core Preparation	TFM 625 - Seminar: Writing Short Narrative and Documentary Films	3	Yes
Core Preparation	TFM 670 - Seminar: Midway Review Production	3	Yes
Production Elective	TFM 522 - Advanced Film and Television Cinematography	3	
Production Elective	TFM 540 - Documentary Production	3	
Production Elective	TFM 560 - Advanced Film	3	
Production Elective	TFM 561 - Advanced Television	3	
Production Elective	TFM 590 - Directing for Film and Television	3	
Production Elective	TFM 621 - Sound Design for Film	3	
Production Elective	TFM 627 - Film Editing and Postproduction	1-3	
Production Elective	TFM 662 - Scene-Based Film Production	3	
Critical Studies Elective	TFM 530 - Selected Topics in Genre Studies for Television and Film	3	
Critical Studies Elective	TFM 563 - Documentary: History and Theory	3	
Critical Studies Elective	TFM 571 - Selected Topics in Director Studies	3	
Critical Studies Elective	TFM 573 - Selected Topics in History of Film, TV, and Media	3	
Critical Studies Elective	TFM 610 - Seminar in Writing for Television and Film	3	
Capstone Project Preparation	TFM 675 - Seminar: Research and Bibliography in Media Production	3	Yes
Capstone Project Preparation	TFM 790 - Portfolio/Examination Preparation	3	Yes
Additional Graduate Units	TFM 510 - Advanced Script Writing for Television and Film	3	
Additional Graduate Units	TFM 522 - Advanced Film and Television Cinematography	3	
Additional Graduate Units	TFM 530 - Selected Topics in Genre Studies for Television and Film	3	
Additional Graduate Units	TFM 540 - Documentary Production	3	
Additional Graduate Units	TFM 560 - Advanced Film	3	
Additional Graduate Units	TFM 561 - Advanced Television	3	
Additional Graduate Units	TFM 563 - Documentary: History and Theory	3	
Additional Graduate Units	TFM 571 - Selected Topics in Director Studies	3	

Additional Graduate Units	TFM 573 - Selected Topics in History of Film, TV, and Media	3	
Additional Graduate Units	TFM 590 - Directing for Film and Television	3	
Additional Graduate Units	TFM 621 - Sound Design for Film	1-3	
Additional Graduate Units	TFM 627 - Film Editing and Postproduction	3	
Additional Graduate Units	TFM 662 - Scene-Based Film Production	1-3	
Additional Graduate Units	TFM 798 - Special Study	1-6	
Additional Graduate Units	THEA 795 - Practicum in Theatre Arts	1-6	

From SDSU website:

Advancement to Candidacy

In addition to meeting the general requirements for advancement to candidacy described in Requirements for Master's Degrees, students seeking the Master of Fine Arts in Film, and New Media Production must complete TFM 670 with a grade of B or better prior to advancement.

Specific Requirements

Candidates for the Master of Fine Arts degree in Film and Television production must complete 54 units of coursework to include the following:

Core Preparation Courses

Fifteen units of core preparation courses comprised of

- [TFM 601 - Business Aspects of Film](#) Units: **3**
- [TFM 605 - Seminar: Production for Television and Film](#) Units: **3**
- [TFM 610 - Seminar in Writing for Television and Film](#) Units: **3**
- [TFM 625 - Seminar: Writing Short Narrative and Documentary Films](#) Units: **3**
- [TFM 670 - Seminar: Midway Review Production](#) Units: **3**

Production Electives

Six units of production electives selected from

- [TFM 522 - Advanced Film and Television Cinematography](#) Units: 3
- [TFM 540 - Documentary Production](#) Units: 3
- [TFM 560 - Advanced Film](#) Units: 3
- [TFM 561 - Advanced Television](#) Units: 3
- [TFM 590 - Directing for Film and Television](#) Units: 3
- [TFM 621 - Sound Design for Film](#) Units: 3
- [TFM 627 - Film Editing and Postproduction](#) Units: 1-3
- [TFM 662 - Scene-Based Film Production](#) Units: 3

Critical Studies Electives

Complete nine units of critical studies courses from the following:

- [TFM 530 - Selected Topics in Genre Studies for Television and Film](#) Units: 3
- [TFM 563 - Documentary: History and Theory](#) Units: 3
- [TFM 571 - Selected Topics in Director Studies](#) Units: 3
- [TFM 573 - Selected Topics in History of Film, TV, and Media](#) Units: 3
- [TFM 610 - Seminar in Writing for Television and Film](#) Units: 3

or with approval of the Graduate Advisor, courses on film theory and/or history offered by other departments.

Capstone Project Preparation

All students will take Plan B (Comprehensive Examination) and enroll in nine units of capstone project preparation to include

- [TFM 675 - Seminar: Research and Bibliography in Media Production](#) Units: 3
- [TFM 790 - Portfolio/Examination Preparation](#) Units: 6

15 Additional Graduate Units

With approval of the graduate adviser, 15 additional graduate units in Television, Film and New Media, Theatre, and other departments.

- TFM 510 - Advanced Script Writing for Television and Film Units: **3**
- TFM 522 - Advanced Film and Television Cinematography Units: **3**
- TFM 530 - Selected Topics in Genre Studies for Television and Film Units: **3**
- TFM 540 - Documentary Production Units: **3**
- TFM 560 - Advanced Film Units: **3**
- TFM 561 - Advanced Television Units: **3**
- TFM 563 - Documentary: History and Theory Units: **3**
- TFM 571 - Selected Topics in Director Studies Units: **3**
- TFM 573 - Selected Topics in History of Film, TV, and Media Units: **3**
- TFM 590 - Directing for Film and Television Units: **3**
- TFM 621 - Sound Design for Film Units: **3**
- TFM 627 - Film Editing and Postproduction Units: **1-3**
- TFM 662 - Scene-Based Film Production Units: **3**
- TFM 798 - Special Study Units: **1-3**
- THEA 795 - Practicum in Theatre Arts Units: **1-6**

Up to 6 units of TFM 798 and 6 units of THEA 795 are allowed as electives.

Electives Outside the School of Theatre, Television, and Film

No more than nine units of electives outside the School of Theatre, Television, and Film.