

FILMMAKER

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Lulu Wang's *The Farewell*
Spotlight on Television
Rick Alverson's *The Mountain*
Film School Guide

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"Hollywood Flirts with Short Films on the Web" was a *New York Times* headline from June 2000. Sites like iFilm, Pop and, most prominently, AtomFilms were seeking broadband gold by streaming shorts online. AtomFilms even had a coup—it had just "premiered" George Lucas's USC film school short, *Electronic Labyrinth: THX-1138 4EB*. In the article, Atom CEO Mika Salmi talked about the new and growing audience ready to devour shorts "on airplanes, in shopping malls and even in elevators," while the author also wrote about shorts budgets heading into the millions of dollars.

Just three months later the dotcom crash would begin, wiping out these digital dreams. And five years later YouTube would be founded, beginning a trend toward the monetization of defiantly amateur content. For its part, AtomFilms—which had thrown lavish Sundance parties as well as fattened page counts of magazines like this one through its advertising buys—sold itself to a cable company, Comedy Central, where no trace of its former identity can be found.

What goes around comes around. Our backpage essay this issue is by Brian Newman, who writes about Quibi, a new short-form platform led by former Disney and DreamWorks exec Jeffrey Katzenberg that has raised billions of dollars to bring you professional content you can consume on airplanes, in shopping malls and even in elevators. But while the jury may be out on the success of this new venture, film schools and cable companies—indeed, the television industry in general—are doing quite well. And if this issue seems a bit fatter than usual, that's because it contains our first-ever section on television, as well as our now-annual film school guide. For the former, Noel Murray writes about the role of money in today's productions, large and small; I interview Leslye Headland, co-creator of my favorite show this year, *Russian Doll*; Matt Mulcahey speaks with three cinematographers to discover the latest trends in TV lensing; and Vikram Murthi learns how production design and digital effects blend to create the Times Square of *The Deuce*. In addition to an updated version of last year's film school guide, the film school section contains tips collated by Matt Prigge on how to make the most of your education and filmmaker Stephen Cone on how he teaches acting to film students.

The rest of the issue is packed, from my interview with Lulu Wang about her moving and tremendously assured feature *The Farewell* to Michael Tully talking with one of independent film's real iconoclasts, Rick Alverson, about *The Mountain*; editor Michael Taylor on the importance of listening to footage; and Ben Odell's wonderful remembrance of his early days as a producer that also happens to be a tribute to the late, great Stanley Donen.

See you next issue.

Best,



Scott Macaulay
Editor-in-Chief

032 — THE KINDEST DENIAL

With her triumphant second feature, *The Farewell*, writer/director Lulu Wang travels back to her family's China hometown for a sophisticated, heartfelt and disarmingly wise drama about all the things left unsaid. Interview by Scott Macaulay.

038 — THE AMERICAN WAY

Director Rick Alverson calls his latest picture, the masterfully unsettling *The Mountain*, about a traveling lobotomist and his young photographer sidekick, "a problem film" as well as a "beige obstruction." Michael Tully speaks to Alverson about his rigorous, deeply felt cinema.

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Spanning 15 years across three seasons, David Simon and George Pelecanos's *The Deuce* finds mesmerizing drama within the '70s and '80s New York pornography industry. Convincingly recreating a pre-Disnified Times Square, the show spotlights the talents of production designer Scott Dougan and visual effects supervisor Jim Ryder, who reveal their secrets to Vikram Murthi.

078 — SCREEN OVERLOAD

Matt Mulcahey on how cinematographers are adapting to the technical, budget and schedule demands of contemporary television.

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After debuting with a program in the 1979 New York Film Festival, the nonprofit IFP has evolved into the nation's oldest and largest organization of independent filmmakers, and also the premier advocate for them. Since its start, IFP has supported the production of 12,000 films and provided resources to more than 30,000 filmmakers — voices that otherwise might not have been heard. For additional information: ifp.org.

Optimal Value

**MATT PRIGGE GATHERS TIPS FROM GRADUATES ABOUT
MAKING THE MOST OF A FILM SCHOOL EDUCATION.**

What's the main reason to go to film school? You could say to broaden the mind, to learn about cinema history, to meet future collaborators. Those are all true, but at base, the chief reason is to learn a skill. Ideally, you exit your program (whether it's undergrad or graduate) ready to enter the industry. Perhaps you won't be doing what you expected when you first applied, but you also don't want to emerge with no idea what's next.

That said, film school can be tough. There are countless ways to do it, and it can be hard to focus and get the most from your tenure. We spoke with film school grads—some undergrad only, others who braved an M.A. and or a Ph.D. program—about their stories, mistakes and advice on how to use your time, and money, wisely.

Listen to your classmates

Film school can be humbling: Every day, you see how many people share your same general goal and are fighting for limited spots in a cutthroat industry. On the brighter side, you also have people who can help you get outside your head and see your work through a new set of eyes. Class critiques can help you spot bad ideas, refine good ones and find your voice.

Laura Moss, who attended New York University before making shorts such as *Fry Day*, has never forgotten fellow students' comments on her work, for better and worse. "In our program, the criticism was public and harsh," Moss says. Harsh, though, isn't always the same as bad. "The feedback in film school didn't change the kinds of films I wanted to make, but it really helped me clarify my tone."

The experience also toughened her up. "It's painful to look at a film you made and confront all of your mistakes—the opportunities you missed on set, a faltering performance, coverage you didn't get," Moss says. "But if you can face the shortcomings of your film, you have a chance of addressing them in the edit. If you can be honest with yourself about how you would do things differently next time but avoid flagellating yourself and dwelling on those mistakes, you save a lot of time. And you have time to make a lot more work, which is the only way to get better."

Find a mentor

Speaking of feedback, there's nothing like getting it from people who've been around. "The most helpful thing I did for myself was take teachers and not courses," says Beth de Araújo, who acquired her MFA in screenwriting at AFI and whose latest short is an OxyContin drama called *Chevy Chase*. For de Araújo, that professor was Michael Urban, cowriter of the 2004 indie comedy *Saved*. The two just clicked, like friends—a case where "someone appreciates your voice and persistence, and you respect their opinion and appreciate their advice."

That kind of relationship doesn't happen easily, de Araújo understands. "They can be very hard to find, especially because the mentor does not get as much out of the relationship as the mentee," she points out. But if you luck into finding a mentor, you have someone who can advise you well past graduation. "Mike reminds me again and again to be earnest. I can get caught up in trying to be clever, but that's not why I love movies."

Richard Van also advises focusing on mentors. A graduate of the MFA film directing program at the California Institute of the Arts, whose latest short *Hiếu* just played Cannes, he eventually chose Lee Anne Schmitt, the avant-garde artist, after they'd had enough meetings to realize they were clicking. Schmitt's work, Van admits, "couldn't be any further from my own," but he thought that was a perk, not a demerit.

"She would be very critical about how each of my shots functioned and what was necessary to the larger narrative and the effect I wanted," Van says. "I could always trust her to give me the cold, hard truth. I think she was right about 99 percent of the time." Having someone who thinks differently from you inspires you to think outside your comfort zone, thus tightening up your work. "She really challenged me to look at new possibilities in my filmmaking."

Find your future network

Art attracts the shy, the weird, the lonely. But to do art—especially one as expensive as film—you have to be social. One good way to make friends: loan yourself out as a crew person. An MFA grad, who wishes to remain anonymous, tells us crewing



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is a great way to network and learn specific skills. “There’s a balance to strike: You don’t want to crew on a million sets and leave no time for other kinds of work,” they say. “But you also really need to understand the economy of crewing. If you do someone a favor, they owe you one, and people at film school really honor that. Rack up those favors, and save them for a rainy day. Film school is more about meeting fellow students than the classes themselves. Working on other people’s sets is the ultimate way to get to know people and build a good reputation for yourself.”

Find your career path

You may have initially wanted to attend film school to become a director, but directing careers don’t always pan out. Consider keeping your options open by making yourself valuable in more than one discipline.

Dan Trachtenberg directed the J. J. Abrams–shepherded hit thriller *10 Cloverfield Lane*, as well as an episode of *Black Mirror* and the forthcoming comics show *The Boys*. He earned his B.A. in film and media arts at Philadelphia’s Temple University, and despite how hard he worked at directing, he knew it was smart to broaden his skills. “There’s no ladder to being a director,” says Trachtenberg. “But there is a ladder to being an editor and a cinematographer and a producer.” (Fortunately for him, Trachtenberg says, his directing career took off—“I quickly realized that’s not my gift to be doing those things!”)

Moss also suggests learning a crew or department head skill—“ideally, something that puts you in proximity to other directors.” She adds, “It’s lonely being a director. You are the only one of you on set, you are in charge, and you have to figure out your process while going through it.” Moss’s solution was to become immersed in production design, a job she still works at for the occasional day job—and which feeds into her

own work. “Being a production designer, I get to experience the way other directors work and borrow the best of what they’ve developed for themselves in my own process. I used film school as an opportunity to hone my design skills and build my production design reel. This was and continues to be a tremendous help after school. I’ve had the opportunity to design on features, music videos and commercial spots. I am still struggling to make a sustainable living as a writer/director, and building up the design skills and portfolio has created a lot more security for me.”

Allow yourself to experiment and to fail

Some people fail in public: They make a bad film or a film that undeservedly fails. It’s on their résumé, it’s out in the world and it can negatively affect future work. One of the things you’re paying for when you pay for film school is the chance to fail inside a bubble. “It’s terribly cliché,” says de Araújo, “but it felt really important at the time to ‘achieve’ in school, when in hindsight it’s really the only time you have to fuck up royally without true consequence.” If she could do it again, she’d have pushed herself in different directions. “I wish I allowed myself the freedom to explore other genres, perhaps some that felt very foreign and uncomfortable to me. The industry will pigeonhole you enough—you don’t have to do it to yourself yet. Attempting something out of your comfort zone will only enhance your craft in the long run and make you think about story in a new way.”

Be self-reliant

One thing everyone we spoke with agreed on was that you can’t just go with the flow. “You get what you put in,” says Trachtenberg. “You’re learning a trade. You need the information. You need to learn how to apply this. It doesn’t matter what grade you get on a project and what amount of homework you do or don’t do, what a pain in the butt your teacher is or not.”

What Trachtenberg did was make sure he was working outside the strictures of film school. The summer before his freshman year, he took classes at New York Film Academy, as well as at University of the Arts, also in Philadelphia. During his tenure, he spent every spring and winter break and every summer in Los Angeles, working as a PA or an AD or a grip or driving cars for AFI student films. "The only way you get ahead is if you find your specialty, the thing that makes you unique and have something to offer," Trachtenberg says. "That's not going to happen if you treat film school like school."

It's also smart to do a lot of work before school. "I wrote a lot of scripts while I was at film school. If I could go back in time, I would have written more before I started the program, so I could have spent more time crewing on sets," says our anonymous grad. There's also this harsh truth: "Come prepared with money." At their school, they quick-

ly realized one had to be loaded to get by. "If you can put the money together for tuition, god bless. If you need to take out loans to pay for it, then I would say: reconsider attending this school. It sucks, but it's true."

School can be good for a mid-career shift

David Miranda Hardy already had a long career when he went back to school. He spent more than a decade working as a sound designer on films in his native Chile and elsewhere in the Americas. But it wasn't enough. He wanted to push himself further in the industry. In 2007, armed in part with a Fulbright scholarship, Miranda Hardy moved to Philadelphia to start the MFA program at Temple. Now, he's the showrunner for *Bala Loca*, a Chilean drama on Netflix.

"Going back to school gave me the skill set necessary to be a showrunner," Miranda Hardy says. His thesis short,

Topo Gigio is Dead, wound up selected by more than 20 international festivals. He's been able to use that, along with the degree itself, to look credible to the powers-that-be because he didn't have a track record writing and directing. On top of that, he was also able to parlay that into his position in the film and media culture department at Middlebury College in Vermont, which allowed him to support himself financially during the years he was trying to get *Bala Loca* off the ground.

"For me, it worked to go to grad school after years of professional experience. It also worked to take creative risks, to fight back my own assumptions of what could I do well or not, to challenge myself as strongly and often as I could tolerate," says Miranda Hardy. "At school, I learned all the skills that allowed me to start writing for the first time in my life and become a showrunner a few years after graduation. It was an essential boost of confidence."

Matt Prigge is a writer and professor based in Brooklyn. He's the former film editor of *Metro*, and has written for *Philadelphia Weekly*, *The Village Voice*, *Nashville Scene* and *Uproxx*. He teaches at NYU, where he received his Master's in Cinema Studies.

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THE FILMMAKER FILM SCHOOL GUIDE

Returning here is *Filmmaker's* now-annual guide to noteworthy film schools across the United States. As before, this is a factual and hopefully useful list of schools, complete with average tuition and deadlines, that range from institutions that focus heavily on production to those that mix critical theory with practice. There are public and private schools, universities with storied histories and relative newcomers to the film education field. Prospective students should remember that the choice of film school can be a career-defining decision, setting a filmmaker on a clear professional path or perhaps stranding him or her with a heavy debt burden. Accordingly, we recommend all readers headed to film school do their own further research on the schools included here before applying. (Some info is the most recent available and some from the prior 2018/19 year.)

School name

- 1 Location
- 2 Graduate, undergraduate or both?
- 3 What everyone knows
- 4 What everyone doesn't know
- 5 Notable faculty
- 6 Notable graduates
- 7 Financial aid (merit/need-based/both?)
- 8 Average tuition
- 9 Admission deadline
- 10 Website

Academy of Art University: San Francisco Art School

- 1 79 New Montgomery St, San Francisco, CA, 94105
- 2 Both
- 3 According to *U.S. News*, this for-profit university is among the least selective in the country, accepting 100% of its applicants.
- 4 This family-owned university, which according to *Forbes*, is the largest private art university in the country and offers an online masters degree program, is also controversially a real estate behemoth, owning hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of commercial properties in San Francisco.
- 5 Producer and writer Jana Sue Memel, DP Ken Ferro, director Jack Perez
- 6 Editor Jason T. Morrow (*Star Wars*), director Chris Milk
- 7 Need
- 8 \$26,147
- 9 Rolling
- 10 <https://www.academyart.edu/academics/motion-pictures-television>

AFI Conservatory

- 1 2021 North Western Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90027
- 2 Graduate
- 3 The campus and school size is small, with a limit of 140 fellows each year.
- 4 The Fellow to faculty ratio is 3 to 1.
- 5 Susan Ruskin is the dean. Zal Batmanglij, DP Steve Yedlin, Destin Daniel Cretton
- 6 Terrence Malick (*The Tree of Life*), David Lynch (*Blue Velvet*), Darren Aronofsky (*Black Swan*), Ari Aster (*Hereditary*)
- 7 Both
- 8 \$61,425
- 9 Depends on program
- 10 <http://www.afi.edu>

Biola University

- 1 13800 Biola Ave, La Mirada, CA 90639
- 2 Undergraduate
- 4 It has a 10,000-square-foot production center with almost \$3 million worth of equipment.
- 5 Production supervisor Lisa Swain, producer Jack Hafer
- 6 Scott Derrickson (*Doctor Strange*)
- 7 Both
- 8 \$41,976
- 9 November 15 (early action 1), January 15 (early action 2), March 1 (regular admission)
- 10 <https://www.biola.edu/cinema-and-media-arts-ba>

Boston University

- 1 233 Bay State Rd, Boston MA 02215 (admissions)
- 2 Both
- 3 The school has its own student-run TV and media service, BUTV 10.
- 4 The school has a selective internship program in which students can work with high-end professionals in Los Angeles, London or Sydney.
- 5 Critic and writer Ray Carney, producer and writer Michael Loman, director and producer Mary Jane Doherty
- 6 Orlando Bagwell (director of UC Berkley's doc program), Nancy Dubuc (CEO of VICE), Bonnie Hammer (chairperson, NBC Universal), Joshua Weinstein (*Menashe*), Josh and Benny Safdie (*Good Time*)
- 7 Both
- 8 \$54,720
- 9 November 1 (early decision), January 6 (early decision 2 and regular admission)
- 10 <http://www.bu.edu/com/academics/degree-programs/ba-in-cinema-media-studies/>

CalArts School of Film/Video

- 1 24700 McBean Parkway, Valencia, CA 91355
- 2 Both
- 3 Tim Burton attended to study character animation.
- 4 The much-debated "CalArts" animation style is something of a misnomer as there is much diversity in the school's output.
- 5 Directors Thom Andersen, James Benning, Pia Borg, Josephine Decker, Nina Menkes
- 6 Tim Burton (*Alice in Wonderland*), Andrew Stanton (*Finding Nemo*), codirector Chris Buck (*Frozen*), director Don Hall (*Big Hero 6*), director Pete Docter (*Inside Out*), director Eliza Hittman (*Beach Rats*)
- 7 Both
- 8 \$50,850
- 9 December 3 (preferred deadline), January 7 (regular deadline) for fall semester; currently rolling
- 10 <https://filmvideo.calarts.edu/>

California State University, Northridge

- 1 18111 Nordhoff St, Northridge, CA 91330
- 2 Both
- 3 It's home to a 130-seat motion picture theater.
- 4 Students must submit a faculty-reviewed portfolio to be admitted to the undergraduate film production program.
- 5 Independent producer and screenwriter Scott Sturgeon; documentary director and producer Thelma Vickroy
- 6 Actress Joan Chen (*Twin Peaks*), producer Tracie Graham (*Dumb and Dumber*)
- 7 Both
- 8 \$6,972; if out of state, add \$396 per unit
- 9 October 1-November 30 for fall semester; August 1-31 for spring semester
- 10 <https://www.csun.edu/mike-curb-arts-media-communication/cinema-television-arts>

Chapman University, Dodge College of Film and Media Arts

- 1 283 N. Cypress St, Orange, CA 92866
- 2 Both
- 3 It boasts expensive state-of-the-art facilities (\$42 million) and in 2018 was ranked no. 6 top American film school by *The Hollywood Reporter*.
- 4 Students decompress with "furry friends" brought in during finals week as stress relievers.
- 5 Directors John Badham, Martha Coolidge, Mark Christopher
- 6 Producer Darren Bunkley (*The Amazing Race*), editor Rebekah Fridman (*Masters of Sex*), director Justin Simien (*Dear White People*)
- 7 Both
- 8 \$54,540 for undergraduate; \$42,540-\$54,500 depending on program for graduate
- 9 October 15 for spring 2020; November 1 (early action) and January 15 (regular decision) for fall 2020
- 10 <https://www.chapman.edu/dodge/index.aspxindex.aspx>

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Colorado Film School

- 1 9075 E Lowry Blvd, Denver, CO 80230
- 2 Associate
- 3 It was named one of the top 25 film schools in the country by *The Hollywood Reporter* in 2015. It was also listed in *Variety's* 2018 "Best Film Schools" report.
- 4 The school offers a computer game for students to simulate working on virtual production sets.
- 5 CFS director and assistant director Brian Steward, production designer Jeff Howard
- 6 Aaron Kroger (editorial department, *The Avengers*)
- 8 \$4,800 per year for in-state; \$16,300 per year for out-of-state
- 9 February 15 (priority) and July 1 (late) for fall admission; October 15 (priority) and November 30 (late) for spring admission
- 10 <https://coloradofilmschool.co/>

Columbia College Chicago

- 1 600 S. Michigan Ave, Chicago, IL 60605
- 2 Both
- 3 The Semester in LA (SiLA) program provides students industry training at Raleigh Studios.
- 4 Columbia's faculty continue to teach and shoot on film, as well as digital.
- 5 Karen Loop, producer (*On the Basis of Sex*); John Hancock, director (*Bang the Drum Slowly*, *Twilight Zone* series)
- 6 Lena Waithe, producer (*The Chi*); Len Amato, President, HBO Films; George Tillman Jr., producer and director (*Barbershop*, *The Hate U Give*); Janusz Kaminski, cinematographer (*Saving Private Ryan*, *Schindler's List*, *Ready Player One*)
- 8 \$26,610 (2019-20 undergraduate tuition cost)
- 9 5/1/2019
- 10 <https://www.colum.edu>

Columbia University, Film MFA Program

- 1 2960 Broadway, New York, NY 10027
- 2 Graduate
- 3 Columbia offers an MFA program in Screenwriting, Television Writing, Directing and an MFA in Creative Producing.
- 4 The Netflix series *Making a Murderer* began as a thesis film. Artist and technologist Lance Weiler teaches a forward-thinking Digital Storytellers Lab with Rachel Ginsberg.
- 5 James Schamus, Ramin Bahrani, Bette Gordon, Tom Kalin, Andrew Biegan, Ira Deutchman, Maureen Ryan
- 6 Jennifer Lee (*Frozen*), Kathryn Bigelow (*The Hurt Locker*), Kimberly Peirce (*Boys Don't Cry*), Nicole Holofcener (*Enough Said*), Lisa Cholodenko (*The Kids Are All Right*)
- 7 Both
- 8 2018-9 tuition \$60,784
- 9 12/3/2019
- 10 <https://arts.columbia.edu/film>

DePaul University, School of Cinematic Arts

- 1 243 S. Wabash Ave, Chicago, IL 60604
- 2 Both
- 4 It offers an involved, hands-on experience thanks to its 32,000-square-foot production facility.
- 5 Producers Steven A. Jones and Timothy Peternel; documentary cinematographer Dana Kupper
- 6 Gillian Anderson (*The X-Files*)
- 7 Both
- 8 \$40,551 for undergraduate; \$865 per credit for graduate
- 9 November 15 (early action); February 1 (regular)
- 10 <https://www.cdm.depaul.edu/about/Pages/School-of-Cinematic-Arts.aspx>

Duke University

- 1 Durham, NC 27708
- 2 Both
- 3 A non-profit affiliate of Duke, the Center for Documentary Studies, teaches documentary art across a range of media and presents the Full Frame Documentary Festival.
- 4 It offers an involved, hands-on experience thanks to its 32,000-square-foot production facility.
- 5 Josh Gibson, Shambhavi Kaul
- 6 Bob Yeoman, cinematographer; Mark Vahradian, producer
- 7 Both
- 8 \$53,744
- 9 1/3/2020
- 10 <https://ami.duke.edu>

Emerson College

- 1 120 Boylston St, Boston, MA 02116
- 2 Both
- 3 It is considered a top film school, despite not being mentioned as much as other bigger names.
- 5 Director Julia Halperin, DP Harlan Bosmajian, producer Mike S. Ryan, screenwriter Diane Lake
- 6 Director Jeremiah Zagar (*We the Animals*), DP Shane Hurlbut
- 7 Both
- 8 \$48,560 for undergraduate; \$1,276 per credit for graduate
- 9 November 1 (early action) and January 15 (regular) for fall admission; November 1 for January admission
- 10 <https://www.emerson.edu/visual-and-media-arts>

Emory University

- 1 201 Dowman Dr, Atlanta, GA 30322
- 2 Both
- 4 Ten Film Studies Majors a year are selected to take part in a new collaborative program with Goizueta Business School, Concentration in Film and Media Management.
- 5 Screenwriter Joe Conway
- 7 Both
- 8 \$53,070
- 9 November 1 (early decision I); January 1 (early decision II and regular decision)
- 10 <http://filmstudies.emory.edu/home/>

Fairleigh Dickinson University

- 1 201 Dowman Dr, Atlanta, GA 30322
- 2 Both
- 5 Director Howard Libov, DP David Landau
- 6 Script supervisor Anthony Pettine (*Black Swan*)
- 7 Both
- 8 \$45,528 for undergraduate; \$1,272 per credit for graduate
- 9 November 15 (early decision); March 1 (regular)
- 10 <https://view2.fdu.edu/academics/becton-college/arts/film/>

Fashion Institute of Technology

- 1** 227 W. 27th St, NY, NY 10001
- 2** Undergraduate and Associate
- 3** It's one of the top colleges in the world for the fashion industry.
- 4** The brand new Film and Media program had its first graduating class in 2018.
- 5** Director Michelle Handelman
- 6** Director Joel Schumacher (*The Lost Boys*), actress Melissa McCarthy (*Bridesmaids*), Calvin Klein, David Chu
- 7** Both
- 8** \$4,890 in state (associate), \$14,670 out of state (associate); \$6,870 in state (undergraduate), \$20,792 out of state (undergraduate)
- 9** January 1 for fall admission; October 1 for spring admission
- 10** <https://www.fitnyc.edu/film-and-media>

Feinstein Graduate School of Cinema

- 1** 2900 Bedford Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11210
- 2** Graduate
- 3** Steven Soderbergh is on the school's advisory council.
- 4** This school, which opened its doors in 2015, hosts a variety of post-grad programs, including two focused on "media scoring" and "sonic arts."
- 5** Directors Alison Maclean, Sarah Christman and Billy Kent; producer Jason Kliot; DP Tom Richmond
- 7** Merit
- 8** Varies by program: up to \$20,246 for in state; up to \$29,396 for out of state
- 9** Rolling
- 10** <http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/web/academics/schools/mediaarts/schools/feinstein.php>

Florida State University, College of Motion Picture Arts

- 1** 600 W. College Ave, Tallahassee, FL 32306
- 2** Both
- 3** Alum and *Moonlight* director Barry Jenkins recruited many of his FSU colleagues for the production of his Academy Award-winning film.
- 4** The school has a five-to-one faculty-to-student ratio.
- 5** Reb Braddock, Mark Vargo, Dustin Cawood, Antonio Mendez Esparza, Valerie Scoon, Jennifer Riker, Victor Nunez, Jonathan Stone, Tom Mikota, Vicky Meyer, Paul Cohen, Greg Marcks, Marisol Gomez-Mouakad
- 6** Barry Jenkins, Adele Romanski, T.S. Nowlin, Jonathan King, Stephen Broussard, Wendy Mericle, Ryan Saul, Kelsey Scott, E.J. Holowicki, Melissa Carter, Joi McMillon, Nat Sanders, Susan Dawes, David Robert Mitchell
- 7** Both
- 8** \$6,507/year undergrad
- 9** 11/1/2019
- 10** <https://film.fsu.edu>

Full Sail University, Film & Television School

- 1** 3300 University Blvd, Winter Park, FL 32792
- 2** Both
- 3** It's an entertainment media institution offering on-campus and online degrees.
- 4** It began as a recording arts school. Full Sail is a private, for-profit school that has been embroiled in controversy over its graduation rate and student debt load.
- 5** Randy Baker, Jason Boyette
- 6** Director Darren Lynn Bousman (*Saw II*), sound designer David Farmer
- 7** Both
- 8** \$60,000 to \$80,500, depending on program (undergraduate); \$31,000 (graduate program in film production)
- 9** Rolling
- 10** https://hello.fullsail.edu/brand_1ar_film_television

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Photo by Joel Jares.

[ARTS.COLUMBIA.EDU/FILMMAKER](https://arts.columbia.edu/filmmaker)

Harvard University

- 1 Carpenter Center, 24 Quincy St, Cambridge, MA 02138
- 2 Both
- 3 It's one of the most prestigious schools in the country.
- 4 The affiliated Harvard Film Archive shows adventurous programming year round.
- 5 Directors Ross McElwee and Lucien Castaing-Taylor
- 6 Directors Joshua Oppenheimer (*The Act of Killing*), Damien Chazelle (*La La Land*), Andrew Bujalski (*Support the Girls*), Rebecca Richman Cohen (*Code of the West*)
- 7 Both
- 8 \$47,730 (undergraduate); \$48,008 (graduate)
- 9 November 1 for early action (undergraduate); January 1 for regular (undergraduate); December 15 (graduate)
- 10 <https://ves.fas.harvard.edu/home>

Howard University

- 1 2400 Sixth St NW, Washington, DC 20059
- 2 Both
- 4 The *Washington Post* called the university an "incubator for cinematographers" in 2013.
- 5 Director Haile Gerima
- 6 Director and DP Ernest Dickerson (*The Wire*, *DP Do the Right Thing*); DPs Arthur Jafa (*Daughters of the Dust*) and Bradford Young (*Arrival*); actors Anthony Anderson (*Black-ish*), Taraji P. Henson (*Hidden Figures*), Chadwick Boseman (*Black Panther*)
- 7 Both
- 8 \$24,966 (undergraduate); \$31,309 (graduate)
- 9 December 15 (early action, undergraduate) and February 15 (regular, undergraduate); April 14 (graduate)
- 10 <https://communications.howard.edu/departments/media-journalism-and-film/>

Ithaca College

- 1 953 Danby Rd, Ithaca, NY 14850
- 2 Undergraduate
- 3 It is the alma mater of Disney CEO Bob Iger.
- 5 Editor and director Cathy Crane; sound editor Marlena Grzaslewicz
- 6 Producer, actor and director David Boreanaz; director Mark Romanek; producer Bill D'Elia
- 7 Both
- 8 \$43,978
- 9 November 1 (early decision) and February 1 (regular)
- 10 <https://www.ithaca.edu/rhp/depts/cinphoto/programs/filmphoto/>

Johns Hopkins University

- 1 10 E. North Ave, 2nd Floor, Baltimore, MD 21202
- 2 Both
- 3 It's home to one of the best medical schools in the world.
- 4 Students studying film at Johns Hopkins collaborate with students from the Film and Video Arts department at the Maryland Institute College of Art.
- 5 Director Matthew Porterfield, artist and filmmaker Karen Yasinsky
- 6 Producers Alexandra Byer and Kimberly Parker; producer Tim Perell leads the MFA program.
- 7 Need
- 8 \$55,350 for undergraduate students, \$40,744 for graduate students.
- 9 November 1st for early decision, January 2nd for regular decision.
- 10 <https://krieger.jhu.edu/film-media/>

The Los Angeles Film School

- 1 6353 Sunset Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90028
- 2 Undergraduate
- 3 A for-profit film school in downtown LA
- 4 The school's building on Sunset Boulevard was originally the historic RCA building, where famous artists like Elvis Presley and the Rolling Stones recorded.
- 5 Director Charles Kanganis, producer Ted Chung, film writer Linda Cowgill, production designer Barbara Dunphy
- 6 Cinematographer Brandon Trost, animator Ariana Miller
- 7 Both
- 8 Varies by program. Check website.
- 9 Open enrollment—new start date begins every four weeks.
- 10 <https://www.lafilm.edu/>

Loyola Marymount University

- 1 1 LMU Dr, Los Angeles, California 90045
- 2 Both
- 3 It's often ranked in the top 10 film schools in the United States by outlets such as *USA Today* and *The Hollywood Reporter*.
- 4 LMU-SFTV students retain creative rights to all work completed there.
- 5 Shane Acker, Glenn Gebhard, Maggie Murphy, Leena Pendharkar, Tom Szollosiector
- 6 Barbara Broccoli, Effie T. Brown, Rick Dunkle, Patricia Witcher, Melissa Blake, Steve Duncan, Brian Helgeland, Jack Orman, Emily Spivey, James Wong
- 7 Both
- 8 Undergraduate: \$49,550 per year; Graduate: \$22,508 to \$26,480 per year (3-year MFA program)
- 9 November 1st for early action, January 15th for regular decision
- 10 <https://sftv.lmu.edu/>

Massachusetts College of Art & Design

- 1 621 Huntington Ave, Boston, Massachusetts, 02115
- 2 Both
- 3 This school has been around for 145 years, originally as a "Normal School" for teachers.
- 4 The MassArt Museum will open in February 2020, focusing on visionary artists and contemporary art.
- 5 Director Soon-Mi Yoo, filmmaker Ericka Beckman, media artist and animator Tammy Dudman
- 6 Director Hal Hartley, set decorator Nancy Haigh, filmmaker Debra Granik
- 7 Both
- 8 \$1,030 for Massachusetts undergraduates, \$15,830 for New England undergraduates, \$24,230 for out of state undergraduates, \$46,800 for graduate students
- 9 December 1st for early decision for undergraduates, February 1st for regular decision for undergraduates, January 5th priority deadline for graduate students, May 10th final deadline for graduate students
- 10 <https://massart.edu/node/1021>

Mount Saint Mary's University

- 1 12001 Chalon Rd, Los Angeles, CA 90049
- 2 Both
- 3 Mount St. Mary's is a predominantly women's college.
- 4 The Film, Media and Communication undergraduate program is located at Sunset Gower Studios in Hollywood.
- 5 Filmmakers/directors Sharri Hefner and Chris Wyatt
- 6 Filmmaker Charles Bunce, actor Lew Dauber
- 7 Merit
- 8 \$41,592
- 9 Rolling
- 10 <https://www.msmu.edu/undergraduate-bachelor-programs/film-media-and-communication/>

New England Institute of Technology

- 1 One New England Tech Blvd, East Greenwich, Rhode Island 02818
- 2 Both
- 3 A private, non-profit technical university
- 4 The main campus and residence hall are in East Greenwich, Rhode Island, with two smaller campuses in Warwick.
- 5 Tom Strolla (department chair), Tony Ricci, Sally Kingsbury
- 6 Kelly Doran (sound utility), Jon Newlander (camera/electrical)
- 7 Both
- 8 \$31,707
- 10 <https://www.neit.edu>

New York Film Academy

- 1 17 Battery Place, New York, NY 10004
- 2 Both
- 3 Aggressively marketed private school, the NYFA has satellites all over the world.
- 4 The for-profit college, now celebrating its 25th year, began in New York and still maintains a campus there, but BFAs and MFAs are only provided at its newer Burbank, CA and Miami locations.
- 5 Writer and director Beth DeAraujo, actor and director Bill Duke, DP John Foster
- 6 Actor and producer Issa Rae, actor and director Paul Dano
- 7 Both
- 8 \$14,001 per semester
- 9 Rolling
- 10 <https://www.nyfa.edu>

The New School

- 1 Johnson Hall, 66 W. 12th St, New York, NY 10011
- 2 Both
- 3 It boasts progressive educators and small class sizes
- 4 Caveh Zahedi teaches a Personal Documentary class.
- 5 Director Vladan Nikolic, director and producer Doug Tirola and media critic Michelle Materre
- 6 Directors Joel Schumacher, Bradley Cooper
- 7 Both
- 8 \$48,760
- 9 January 15 for fall admission, no specific application deadline for the certificate in film production, October 15 for spring admission
- 10 <https://www.newschool.edu/public-engagement/film-production-certificate/>

Northwestern University

- 1 70 Arts Circle Dr, Evanston, Illinois, 60208
- 2 Both
- 3 Northwestern University is located 12 miles north of Chicago.
- 4 Northwestern offers a new MFA in Documentary Media, a program that has student work premiere at New Directors/ New Films and Hot Docs.
- 5 Playwright Thomas Bradshaw, filmmaker Stephen Cone
- 6 Directors Jim Jarmusch and Greg Berlanti
- 7 Need
- 8 \$54,120
- 9 January 2 for undergraduates, January 15 for MA programs
- 10 https://www.communication.northwestern.edu/programs/major_radio_television_film

New York University

- 1 721 Broadway, New York, New York, 10003
- 2 Both
- 3 Spike Lee is the artistic director of the graduate film program.
- 4 Probably the highest number of *Filmmaker* 25 New Faces hail from NYU.
- 5 Filmmakers Todd Solondz and Carol Dysinger, producer Donna Gigliotti
- 6 Directors Martin Scorsese and Joel Coen
- 7 Need
- 8 \$49,962
- 9 February 15th for undergraduates, December 1st for graduate admissions
- 10 <https://tisch.nyu.edu/film-tv>



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**Fairleigh Dickinson University
School of the Arts**

Olympic College

- 1 1600 Chester Ave, Bremerton, Washington, 98337
- 2 Undergraduate
- 3 It's a public two-year community college that educates more than 13,000 students a year.
- 4 Olympic's film program is considered to be a great value, costing much less than the average film production program.
- 5 Filmmaker Amy Hesketh, screenwriter Aaron Drane
- 7 Need
- 8 \$107.57/credit for in-state residents, \$121.73/credit for out-of-state
- 9 Rolling
- 10 <https://www.olympic.edu/filmmaking>

Pepperdine University

- 1 24255 Pacific Coast Highway, Malibu, CA 90263
- 2 Film Studies for undergraduates, Screen and Television Writing for graduates
- 3 The program has hosted notable guest speakers such as Morgan Freeman, Dick Van Dyke and Garry Marshall.
- 4 The Pepperdine Film Studies program is a co-sponsor of the City of Angels Film Festival.
- 5 Playwright and director Joi Carr, playwright Leslie Kreiner Wilson
- 6 Director D.J. Caruso
- 7 Both
- 8 \$55,640
- 9 November 1 for early action, January 15 for regular decision and October 15 for spring semester
- 10 <https://seaver.pepperdine.edu/humanities/undergraduate/film-studies/>

Point Park University

- 1 201 Wood St, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 15222
- 2 Both
- 3 Point Park University is the only university in downtown Pittsburgh.
- 5 Director Steve Cuden, DP John Rice
- 6 Producer Jimmy Miller
- 7 Both
- 8 \$31,180
- 9 None
- 10 <https://www.pointpark.edu/Academics/Schools/COPA/COPADEptsMajors/CinemaandDigitalArts/BACinemaProduction>

Pratt Institute

- 1 200 Willoughby Ave, Brooklyn, New York, 11205
- 2 Both
- 3 It has two campuses, one in Brooklyn and one in Manhattan, giving students access to some of the most historic parts of New York.
- 4 The Visiting Artists lecture program is stellar, recently featuring Trinh T. Minh-Ha, Jim Jarmusch and Lucrecia Martel.
- 5 Directors Eliza Hittman, Lana Wilson, Christopher Radcliffe
- 6 Actor Robert Redford, animator Eric Goldberg
- 7 Both
- 8 \$51,754 for undergraduates, \$55,410 for graduates
- 9 November 1 for early action, May 27 for graduate applicants, October 1 for spring semester
- 10 <https://www.pratt.edu/academics/school-of-art/undergraduate-school-of-art/film-video-department/>

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www.metfilmschool.de

Regent University

- 1 1000 Regent University Dr, Virginia Beach, VA 23464
- 2 Both
- 3 It's a for-profit Christian university that believes "redemptive, positive-value stories are worth telling."
- 4 In addition to its religious focus, Regent was named "a top military-friendly university" by *G.I. Jobs* magazine.
- 5 Producer and professor Andrew C. Quicke
- 6 Actor and comedian Tony Hale, screenwriter Cheryl McKay
- 7 Both
- 8 \$16,980 for undergraduates, \$26,180 for graduates.
- 9 Rolling
- 10 <https://www.regent.edu/school-of-communication-and-the-arts/>

Ringling College of Art and Design

- 1 2700 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, FL 34234
- 2 Undergraduate
- 3 Founded in 1931, Ringling College of Art and Design is a private, independent, nonprofit, four-year college.
- 4 Students are given chance to work on professional films, like Tim Sutton's *Dark Night*.
- 5 Director Bradley Battersby
- 6 Oscar-winning animator Patrick Osborne, YouTube star Michelle Phan
- 7 Both
- 8 \$42,330
- 9 Rolling
- 10 <https://www.ringling.edu/Film>

Rhode Island School of Design

- 1 2 College St, Providence, RI 02903
- 2 Undergraduate
- 3 The RISD facilities offer production studios for video and film as well as 16mm and 35mm film and puppet animation.
- 4 Many thesis films go on to win awards in national and international film festivals.
- 5 Sheri Wills, department head
- 6 Directors Gus Van Sant, artist Ryan Trecartin, Ryan Cunningham
- 7 Need
- 8 \$51,000
- 9 November 1st for early decision, February 1st for regular decision.
- 10 <https://www.risd.edu/academics/film-animation-video/>

Sarah Lawrence College

- 1 1 Mead Way, Bronxville, New York, 10708
- 2 Undergraduate
- 3 It's a small liberal arts school in New York.
- 4 There's a Cinema Sarah Lawrence semester away program during which students make movies with director Jay Craven.
- 5 Writer Marygrace O'Shea, producer Heather Winters
- 6 Director/producer J.J. Abrams, director Damani Baker, producer Jon Avnet
- 7 Both
- 8 \$56,020
- 9 November 1st for early action/early decision I, January 2nd for early decision II, January 15th for regular decision.
- 10 <https://www.sarahlawrence.edu/undergraduate/arts/filmmaking-and-moving-image-arts/>

Savannah College of Art and Design

- 1 516 Drayton St, Savannah, Georgia, 31041.
- 2 Both
- 4 The SCAD-produced sitcom, *The Buzz*, won the 2017 Student Emmy Award.
- 5 Actor D.W. Moffett, casting director Andra Reeve-Rabb
- 6 Visual effects artist Mir Zafar Ali, actress Bevin Prince, filmmakers Nabil Abou-Harb and Leila Djansi
- 7 Both
- 8 \$37,575 for undergraduates, \$38,475 for graduate students.
- 9 No deadline
- 10 <https://www.scad.edu/academics/programs/film-and-television>

San Francisco State University

- 1 1600 Holloway Ave, San Francisco, California, 94132.
- 2 Both
- 3 The school has made *The Hollywood Reporter's* list of the top 25 American film schools for five consecutive years and *Variety's* 2018 list of top film schools worldwide.
- 4 Student films frequently screen at festivals worldwide including Cannes, Telluride and SXSW.
- 5 Pat Jackson, Greta Snider, Joseph McBride, Steven Kovacs
- 6 Screenwriter Steven Zaillian and producer Jonas Rivera
- 7 Both
- 8 \$7,254 undergraduate (California residents), \$4,346 (California residents)
- 9 November 30th
- 10 <https://cinema.sfsu.edu>





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SCI-Arc

- 1 960 E. 3rd St, Los Angeles, CA 90013
- 2 Graduate
- 3 Grounded in architecture, SCI-Arc's master's program also encompasses film, animation, games and marketing.
- 5 Liam Young
- 6 Samuel Pierce Myers
- 7 Merit
- 8 \$45,292
- 9 1/15/20
- 10 <https://www.sciarc.edu>

Stanford University Documentary Program

- 1 450 Serra Mall, Stanford, California, 94305
- 2 Both
- 3 It offers an MFA in documentary film and video.
- 4 Only eight students per year are admitted into the program.
- 5 Director Jamie Meltzer
- 6 Directors Leah Wolchok, Mike Attie, Megan O'Hara and Mark Becker
- 7 Both, but need-based only for undergraduates.
- 8 \$50,703
- 9 December 4th
- 10 <https://www.stanford.edu>

Stony Brook University

- 1 293 Montauk Highway, Southampton, New York, 11968
- 2 Both
- 3 Killer Films head Christine Vachon is the Artistic Director.
- 4 Stony Brook offers tracks in Directing, TV Writing, Screenwriting and Producing.
- 5 David Hinojosa, Pamela Koffler, Lenny Crooks
- 6 Juhyoung Ra and Ethan Scarduzio
- 7 Both
- 8 Total degree: \$30,000 in-state, \$50,000 non-resident
- 9 July 1, 2019.
- 10 <https://www.stonybrook.edu/film>, <https://www.stonybrook.edu/TV>

Syracuse University

- 1 200 Crouse College, Syracuse, New York. 13244
- 2 Both
- 3 It's home to the Newhouse School of Public Communications, with both a radio-TV-film program and a transmedia division.
- 4 The film program wants to build the "total filmmaker" as opposed to focusing students on specialization. Transmedia, computer art and other forms are mixed in with film.
- 5 Producer Kara Herold, filmmaker Mišo Suchý
- 6 Actors Peter Falk and Frank Langella, camera operator Brent Barbano
- 7 Both
- 8 \$52,210 for undergraduates, \$29,160 for graduates
- 9 November 15 for early decision, January 1st for regular decision, January 15th for the Newhouse graduate program, February 1st for transmedia
- 10 <https://vpa.syr.edu/academics/transmedia/undergraduate/film/>

SUNY Purchase

- 1 735 Anderson Hill Rd, Purchase, New York, 10577
- 2 Undergraduate
- 3 Film majors enjoy a high equipment-to-student ratio and have access to a fully equipped sound stage, mix studio, equipment store, screening rooms, and digital editing studios.
- 4 In the junior year, students choose a two-term specialization in one of three production areas (narrative, documentary, or experimental).
- 5 Actor Christopher McCann, independent filmmaker Samantha Marine, director Charlotte Glynn
- 6 Editor Jessica Brunetto, directors Ilya Chaiken and Austin Chick
- 7 Need
- 8 \$6,870 for New York residents, \$16,650 for out of state students
- 9 January 15th
- 10 <https://www.purchase.edu/academics/film/>

School of Visual Arts

- 1 209 E. 23rd St, New York, New York, 10010
- 2 Both
- 3 SVA was founded in 1947 as a school for cartoonists and illustrators.
- 4 SVA's MFA Social Documentary Film program offers a summer-long Alumni Editing Fellowship, as well as allowing alumni continued access to equipment.
- 5 Sound professional Chris Newman; David Black, writer and producer
- 6 Directors Crystal Moselle and Ti West, sound professional Mark Ulano
- 7 Both
- 8 Average: \$20,950 per semester, plus \$1,340 per-semester department fee
- 9 Rolling
- 10 <https://www.sva.edu>

Temple University

- 1 1301 W. Norris St, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19122
- 2 Both
- 3 With over 600 students and 50 faculty members, tracks are offered in narrative, documentary, media arts and more.
- 4 Several new degree programs, including an MA in Media Arts, have been added alongside its MFA program.
- 5 Directors Elisabeth Subrin, Moon Molson, Lauren Wolkstein
- 6 Editor William Goldenberg, director Adam McKay, comedian and actor Tim Heidecker
- 7 Both
- 8 \$17,712 for in-state residents, \$29,808 for out of state students, \$1,022 for state residents per credit hour for graduates, \$1,367 per credit hour for out-of-state graduates.
- 9 November 1st for early action, February 1st for rolling admission.
- 10 <https://tfma.temple.edu/fma>

University of California, Berkeley

- 1 7408 Dwinelle Hall, University of California, Berkeley, California, 94720
- 2 Both
- 3 It is considered one of the most elite public schools in the country.
- 4 Pauline Kael wrote and broadcasted her early reviews while based in Berkeley and also managed the Berkeley Cinema Guild from 1955 to 1960.
- 5 Filmmaker and writer Jeffrey Skoller
- 6 Actors Chris Pine and John Cho
- 7 Both
- 8 \$5,701 for undergraduate/graduate residents, \$20,217 for undergraduate non-residents, \$13,272 for graduate non-residents
- 9 November 30th for undergraduate, December 3rd for graduates
- 10 <https://filmmedia.berkeley.edu/>

University of California, Los Angeles

- 1 225 Charles E. Young Dr E, Los Angeles, California, 90095
- 2 Both
- 3 It's known for its small class sizes and the fact that its program falls under an umbrella including the School of Theater.
- 4 Earlier this year, in partnership with Participant Media, UCLA TFT and the Skoll Center for Social Impact Entertainment at UCLA TFT released a first-of-its-kind, 186-page report
- 5 Screenwriter Phyllis Nagy, director Gina Kim, producer Channing Dungey
- 6 Director Francis Ford Coppola, writer and director Paul Schrader, director Ana Lily Amirpour
- 7 Both
- 8 \$16,000 for undergraduate residents, \$44,992 for undergraduate non-residents, \$16,927 for graduate residents, \$32,029 for graduate non-residents, \$28,516 for MFA residents, \$40,761 for MFA non-residents, \$16,947 for PhD residents, \$32,049 for PhD non-residents
- 9 November 30th for undergraduates, November, December, or February 1st depending on the MA/PhD program
- 10 <https://www.tft.ucla.edu/>

University of Central Florida

- 1 4000 Central Florida Blvd, Orlando, Florida, 32816
- 2 Both
- 3 With more than 68,000 students, it's one of the largest universities in the US.
- 4 It was ranked as one of the nation's most affordable colleges by *Forbes*.
- 5 Editor and director Mark Gerstein, screenwriter Barry Sandler
- 6 Directors Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sanchez, comedian Daniel Tosh, actress Cheryl Hines
- 7 Both
- 8 \$6,379 for undergraduate in-state residents, \$22,478 for out-of-state residents
- 9 May 1st for undergraduates, July 1st for graduates
- 10 <https://www.ucf.edu>

University of Colorado-Boulder

- 1 316 UCB, Denver, CO 80309
- 2 Both
- 3 Alumni include experimental filmmakers Stan Brakhage and Phil Solomon.
- 5 Director/ animator Geoff Marslett
- 6 Director Derek Cianfrance
- 7 Both
- 8 Undergraduate estimated annual costs, \$28,750, Colorado residents; \$53,504, non-residents. Graduate, \$14,756 residents, \$32,214 non-residents
- 9 November 15 (freshman early action); January 15 (freshman regular decision); June 1, fall deadline
- 10 <https://colorado.edu>

University of Colorado-Denver

- 1 1201 Larimer St, Denver, Colorado, 80204
- 2 Undergraduate
- 3 According to the school, the program's "cohort model... builds strong relationships and allows students to work as a team that emulated real-world film and television production."
- 4 Graduates of the program have been nominated for Emmy Awards and received international acclaim for their work in television, film and documentary.
- 5 Directors Eric Jewitt and Jessica McGaugh
- 6 Producer Mitch Dickman, filmmaker Aaron Kopp
- 7 Both
- 8 \$7,920 for in-state residents, \$14,952 for Western Undergraduate Exchange program, \$24,408 for all other non-residents
- 9 August 1st for the fall semester, January 1st for the spring semester
- 10 <https://artsandmedia.ucdenver.edu/filmandtelevision>



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University of Michigan

- 1 6330 N. Quad, 105 S. State Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 48109
- 2 Both
- 3 Ranked one of the top five best public universities in the country by *U.S. News & World Report*
- 4 Students interested in majoring in the Department of Film, Television, and Media must first apply to the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and be accepted to the college.
- 5 Writer Jim Burnstein, filmmaker David Marek, cinematographer Dawn Hollison
- 6 VFX supervisor John Nelson, writer/producer Anna Baumgarten
- 7 Both
- 8 \$15,262 for residents, \$49,350 for non-residents
- 9 November 1st for early action, February 1st for regular decision
- 10 <https://lea.umich.edu/ftvm>

University of Missouri-Columbia

- 1 243 Walter Williams Hall, Columbia, Missouri, 65201
- 2 Undergraduate
- 3 Graduates have gone on to entry positions in the film industry at Los Angeles, Chicago, Atlanta, Kansas City and St. Louis.
- 4 The Murray Center is one of the main sponsors of the True/False Film Festival and student-produced work has premiered at the festival.
- 5 Director Robert Greene, editor Kamau Bilal
- 7 Both
- 8 \$8,637 (in-state), \$25,707 (out-of-state)
- 9 December 1st
- 10 <https://visualstudies.missouri.edu/filmstudies/>

University of North Carolina School of the Arts

- 1 1533 South Main St, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, 27127
- 2 Both
- 3 Founded in 1795, it was the nation's first public university.
- 4 During student's senior year, they travel to Los Angeles with faculty mentors to screen their films for industry executives and influential UNCSA alumni.
- 5 Producer Bob Gosse, director Patrick Read Johnson and editor Michael Miller
- 6 Actor Danny McBride, director Jeff Nichols, editor Zene Baker, filmmakers David Gordon Green and Aaron Katz
- 7 Both
- 8 \$6,497 for in-state undergraduates, \$22,640 for out-of-state undergraduates, \$8,396 for in-state graduates, \$22,103 for out-of-state graduates
- 9 November 1st, January 1st and February 1st
- 10 <https://www.uncsa.edu/filmmaking/index.aspx>

University of North Carolina, Wilmington

- 1 601 S. College Rd, Wilmington, North Carolina, 28403.
- 2 Both
- 3 Located in a thriving film production center, which is home to EUE/Screen Gems Studios, the Film Studies Department is a vital link between UNCW and the local film community.
- 4 The major develops students' analytical, research and writing skills, as well as their creative and technical abilities.
- 5 Filmmaker Artel Great, writer/director Chip Hackler, filmmaker Gerog Koszulinski
- 6 Actor Skeet Ulrich, cinematographer Tyler Ribble
- 7 Both
- 8 \$4,400 for undergraduate residents, \$18,508 for undergraduate non-residents, \$4,720 for graduate residents, \$18,548 for graduate non-residents
- 9 November 15th for early action and February 1st for regular decision for undergraduates, February 15th for graduate students
- 10 <https://uncw.edu/filmstudies/>

University of Pennsylvania

- 1 3405 Woodland Walk, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19104
- 2 Cinema Studies major for undergraduates, certificate in Cinema and Media Studies for graduate students
- 3 Cinema and Media Studies students are able to study abroad. There's the Penn-in-London program, in which students experience the preservation and archiving techniques of the National Film Archive. There's also a Penn-in-Cannes program.
- 4 In 1886, UPenn students participated nude in Eadward Muybridge's "Animal Locomotion" studies.
- 5 Producer and writer Kathy DeMarco Van Cleve
- 6 Screenwriter Jack Stanley, filmmaker Gail Dolgin
- 7 Need
- 8 \$51,156
- 9 November 1st for early decision, January 15th for regular decision
- 10 <http://cinemastudies.sas.upenn.edu/>

University of Southern California

- 1 900 W. 34th St, Los Angeles, California, 90089
- 2 Both
- 3 It's the school of George Lucas and also one of the most expensive schools on this list.
- 4 Founded in 1929, USC was the first university in the country to offer a bachelor's degree in film.
- 5 Screenwriter Howard Rodman, writer/director Pete Sollett, editor and producer Mary Sweeney
- 6 Directors Judd Apatow (drop-out), other notable directors include Doug Liman
- 7 Both
- 8 \$57,256 for undergraduates, \$39,316-\$51,622 for graduate students
- 9 December 1st, February 1st, and November 15th, depending on the program
- 10 <https://cinema.usc.edu/production/>



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<p><u>University of Texas, Austin</u></p> <p>1 110 Inner Campus Dr, Austin, Texas, 78712</p> <p>2 Both</p> <p>3 Wes Anderson and Owen Wilson met here before making the short film version of what would become <i>Bottle Rocket</i> in Dallas.</p> <p>4 The program offers a Script-to-Screen class with Matthew McConaughey.</p> <p>5 Producer Felicia D. Henderson, actor Charles Ramirez Berg</p> <p>6 Raymond Mansfield, Matthew McConaughey, Jennifer Howell</p> <p>7 Both</p> <p>8 \$5,157 for resident undergraduates, \$18,358 for non-resident undergraduates, \$4,998 for in-state graduate students, \$9,408 for non-resident graduate students</p> <p>9 December 1st</p> <p>10 https://rtf.utexas.edu</p>	<p><u>Vanderbilt University</u></p> <p>1 Buttrick Hall 132, Box 125, Station B, Nashville, Tennessee, 73235</p> <p>2 Undergraduate</p> <p>3 Nashville is home to a vibrant film community. The Belcourt Theater offers art house programming, and the city is also home to the Nashville Film Festival.</p> <p>4 The school offers a Vandy-in-Hollywood summer internship program.</p> <p>5 Video artist Jonathan Rattner</p> <p>6 Actress Kim Dickens</p> <p>7 Both</p> <p>8 \$50,800</p> <p>9 November 1st for early decision, January 1st for regular decision</p> <p>10 https://as.vanderbilt.edu/cinemamediaarts/</p>	<p><u>Yale University</u></p> <p>1 53 Wall St, Room 216, New Haven, Connecticut, 06511</p> <p>2 Both</p> <p>3 A prestigious Ivy League school, Yale is often cited as the best university in the country, focusing on history, theory and criticism of cinema alongside production.</p> <p>4 The city is also home to the New Haven Documentary Film Festival.</p> <p>5 Director Jonathan Andrews, programmer Oksana Chefranova</p> <p>6 Film critic Wesley Morris of the <i>New York Times</i>, film critic Bilge Ebiri, directors Jeremy Garelick and Sandra Luckow</p> <p>7 Need</p> <p>8 \$53,430 for undergraduates, \$41,000 for graduate students</p> <p>9 November 1st for early action, January 2nd for regular decision</p> <p>10 https://filmstudies.yale.edu/</p>
<p><u>University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee</u></p> <p>1 2400 E. Kenwood Blvd, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 53211</p> <p>2 Both</p> <p>3 It's featured on <i>The Hollywood Reporter's</i> "Top 20 Film Programs in the World" list in both 2017 and 2018.</p> <p>4 The program offers a dual focus on both the theoretical and practical worlds of filmmaking.</p> <p>5 Producer Tate Buker, director of Milwaukee LGBT Film/Video Festival Carl Bogner</p> <p>6 Filmmaker Kirill Mikhanovsky</p> <p>7 Both</p> <p>8 \$9,588 for undergraduate Wisconsin residents, \$20,867 for out of state undergraduates, \$11,884 for graduate Wisconsin residents, \$24,921 for out of state graduate students. Students from Illinois, Minnesota and the greater Midwest region can receive tuition discounts.</p> <p>9 March 1st for undergraduates, January 15th for graduate students</p> <p>10 https://uwm.edu/arts/film/</p>	<p><u>Vermont College of Fine Arts</u></p> <p>1 36 College St, Montpelier, Vermont, 05602</p> <p>2 Graduate</p> <p>3 The MFA film program was launched in 2013, in response to a changing film industry and the need for artists to revolutionize the ways motion pictures are created and experienced.</p> <p>4 Students tailor their studios to their own creative needs and available space.</p> <p>5 Directors Till Schauder, Terence Nance, Josephine Decker, Laura Colella</p> <p>6 Filmmaker Josh Koury, director Emilie Upczak</p> <p>7 Both</p> <p>8 \$29,102</p> <p>9 September 1st</p> <p>10 https://vcfa.edu/programs/mfa-in-film/</p>	
	<p><u>Wesleyan University</u></p> <p>1 45 Wyllys Ave, Middletown, Connecticut, 06459</p> <p>2 Undergraduate</p> <p>3 The Wesleyan film program focuses more on "thinking" than "doing"; It's more theoretical than practical.</p> <p>4 Its cinema archives include papers from Martin Scorsese, Clint Eastwood and Ingmar Bergman.</p> <p>5 Critic and journalist Jeanine Basinger</p> <p>6 Directors Michael Bay, Ruben Fleischer and Miguel Arteta, writer Akiva Goldsman</p> <p>7 Need</p> <p>8 \$56,704</p> <p>9 November 15th for early decision, January 1st for regular decision</p> <p>10 https://www.wesleyan.edu/filmstudies/</p>	

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Act Naturally

FILMMAKER STEPHEN CONE ON WHAT HE'S LEARNED
—AND WHAT HE TEACHES—AS AN ACTING INSTRUCTOR.

On the first day of any given screen-acting class at Northwestern University, it's not uncommon for me to be facing down a bifurcated group of eight theater students and eight film students. As I sit on the receiving end of nerve-racked glares, listening to introductory tales of middle school plays and high school short films, of little to some to no experience, I seek to comfort and calm with one simple statement: *Everything you need to know about film acting you can learn in 30 seconds.* It's only now that I realize I've been lying to them.

It is one of the baffling paradoxes of American arts academia that many, if not most, theater departments tend not to provide screen acting courses for their student actors, nor do film departments provide opportunities for their directors and writers to practice the back and forth of working with a live human performer. This stubborn adherence to a narrow set of departmental traditions is especially maddening, considering that each side will require the other for the rest of their lives.

For the past six years, I've been fortunate enough to teach for an institution (specifically, Northwestern's School of Communication) that cares about the crossover. If this were not the case, I—a self-taught filmmaker with a theater degree—would not have a job. The reason for the exhilarating mix of theater and film students in these classes is that both RTVF (radio/television/film) and the department of theatre fall under the school of communication banner, and each shares a profound interest in making sure that both performer and technician leave the school equipped to bridge the actor gap.

I've previously written in these pages of my journey from South Carolina theater major to Chicago-based filmmaker, and it's only after about five years of traditional day-jobbing and film- and theater-making in Chicago that local actor Matt Decaro recommended me to a small outfit called Act One Studios. This led to various smaller teaching jobs at organizations like Second City,

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Acting Studio Chicago and Chicago Filmmakers, and in the span of a year or two, I was piecing together a living from teaching (dropping in occasionally to freelance for my beloved Paskal Rudnicke Casting). I could not in that moment recall a single syllabus, agenda or lesson plan from my own training as an actor, and yet, somehow, I felt confident I could pull it off. It's worth stating that at this point I'd made two shorts and three features, and so I must have thought: *I'll do it like that.*

In 2013, after making a handful of films, proving myself a reliable teacher of actors and founding the improvisation-based incubator Cinema Lab at Acting Studio Chicago, I was approached by Northwestern to teach classes in its new Acting for the Screen module (think of it as a track, not quite a minor), a joint effort between the theater and film wings of the school of communication. Suffice it to say, no teaching experience could better reflect my own experience as a student actor and cinephile than the one I've joyfully been tasked with in Evanston. And, in fact, quarter after quarter, there is a palpable and collective sense of relief when the students learn that I am, in fact, one of them.

Back to that first day lie. What I actually mean when I exclaim that everything can be learned in 30 seconds is this: Everything you need to know about *naturalistic* film acting you can learn in 30 seconds. I stand by this. Every one of my introductory acting classes begins with a long-form improvisation in which the students play themselves in an audition waiting room setting. I might give them a piece of backstory or two, but in general, I advise them to play themselves in “security camera”/borderline documentary fashion. Watching it back, the students are astonished at how instantly everyone clicks into an effortless naturalism, how little they have to perform for the camera, and how fascinating it is to watch a person react or listen to another. And yet, it’s easy to mislead with an exercise like this: Once written text enters the picture, it becomes just as instantly apparent that it’s not easy to be so effortlessly natural when the script and character have been preconceived. And indeed, as actual scenes from actual movies are integrated into the class, the students find themselves stumbling back into Actor-y territory but always with the guiding light of that first long-form improvisation.

There isn’t one way to teach screen acting. I’ve heard tell of instructors who combine lecture and workshop, devoting a decent percentage of any given course to relaying the various modes and histories of American screen acting, from silents through Golden Age to Method and latter-century realism, and I do think there is value in that. In a standard class, time also might be given to marking the beats, intentions, and actions in a scene, providing a definitive and specific road map forward. Perhaps because I’m a self-taught filmmaker who doesn’t (contrary to my theatrical education) rehearse my films, there is very little in the way of theory, method, terminology or traditional academic study in my own classes. On my own academic island, I stubbornly press forward with a belief that 99% of any given acting class should consist of actors acting and, specifically, in my own case, almost literally mirror my collaboration on an actual film set.

After that initial improvisation, I begin assigning scenes from pre-existing material, which are workshopped in one or two camera rehearsals followed by wide, medium and close-up shots,



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a take or two each. I begin the workshop process with pre-existing scenes from micro-budget American independent screenplays by everyone from Frank V. Ross and Zach Clark to Amy Seimetz and myself, fly-on-the-wall scenes that allow the experienced and the inexperienced to enter into scripted narrative subtly and loosely. From there, we enter slightly more polished, plot-driven territory, tackling scenes from films as varied as *Tootsie*, *Superbad* and *The Social Network*. Round three takes us into TV, the good and the bad, with scenes from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *CSI*, *Six Feet Under*, *Pretty Little Liars*, and occasionally, even a failed oddity like the recent *American Gothic*. Finally, as the quarter comes to a close, I send them commercial copy and put them through a mock audition scenario. Throughout, I am working with them in the moment to keep things spontaneous and alive, focusing more on rhythm, color and emotional commitment than specific line-readings or underlying motive. (Of course, there are exceptions when need be.)

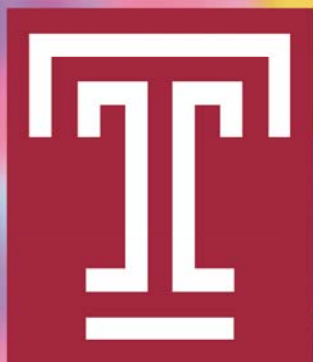
As we press on from workshop to workshop, a strange and wonderful thing begins to happen: As the scenes morph from style to style, era to era, the students will find, sometimes to their surprise, that they inherently understand the tone of the piece—when to be subtle and natural, and when to be heightened and stylized. This happens without any significant discussion of tone or style, and the only way I can explain this phenomena is that when you endow a performer with confidence, and create an atmosphere in which a student is charged with meeting a scene or a piece of text where it's at, they know what to do.

Despite this freewheeling process of empowerment, I would not declare myself a passive instructor. I would be remiss in pretending I'm not guiding them and making adjustments along the way. There are moments, class after class, where I have to jump in and ask someone to back down and cut the effort in half or, alternately, "do it at 9 rather than 4." But, while we're playing with numbers, this takes place during only about 25% of the class. Mostly, it's about creating a space for self-exploration and repetition. Along the way, too, I'm providing them with a running commentary of industry practicalities and real world anecdotes.

I am, of course, haunted by questions and doubts: Surely, there is a downside to a class consisting entirely of positive reinforcement rather than critical evaluation. Am I getting effortless work at the cost of interesting work? Am I encouraging a lack of preparedness in my almost complete neglect of scene *study*, my ignoring of beats and actions and objectives? By creating a sort of classroom utopia, am I adequately equipping them to deal with a real world set led by an asshole who doesn't know shit about actors and acting? I can only hope that what I'm attempting to give to them—namely, an innate confidence in their own ability to show up and play with the best of them, and a profound belief in their own value, a conviction that they are enough and that they are more interesting than any imagined character—will send them soaring into an ever-changing cultural field with an understanding that nothing is proscribed and anything can happen.

Stephen Cone is a filmmaker and educator based in Chicago. His latest film, *Princess Cyd*, can be found streaming on Netflix.

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