

**The University of Texas at Austin**  
**Department of Radio-Television-Film**  
**Master of Fine Arts Program in Film and Media Production**  
**For Students Entering Fall 2018**

**I. Program Overview**

The objective of the program is to provide graduate professional, conceptual and aesthetic knowledge and training in film and media production. The program allows students to explore a curriculum offering courses focused on narrative and documentary filmmaking and the expanding field of digital arts. It provides a challenging environment where students will produce work in traditional and alternative forms. Creative and critical writing is an integral dimension of this process.

Our M.F.A. program in Film and Media Production also provides students with a unique opportunity to enrich their education through a variety of other courses within the RTF Department and the larger university. The Department offers programs of study in screenwriting, communication technology and policy, ethnic and minority issues, history and criticism of media texts and institutions, international communications, gender and sexuality issues in media, and topics in mass communication theory and research.

**II. Academic Plan of Study Overview**

The M.F.A. degree requires successful completion of 60 course hours. Once you enter, you must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0. The 60 course hours consist of the following:

- 39 RTF production hours (11 required courses):
    - 6 @ 4 hrs = 881KA, 881KB, three 488M classes and one 488M independent study
    - 5 @ 3 hrs = Cinematography, Editing, Screenwriting, Audio, Producing
  - 3 RTF studies hours in RTF 385K, *History of Film*
  - 9 Additional RTF hours (3 courses). These may be production, studies, or writing courses.
  - 6 Supporting Work (2 courses). Any courses outside the RTF Department, or any RTF courses that fall outside your major area of study (film and media production) are eligible to fulfill this requirement. Please note, however, that required courses (*History of Film* and *Screenwriting for Directors*) cannot be counted toward the Supporting Work requirement. You will determine which classes will fulfill this requirement in consultation with the MFA Graduate Adviser.
  - 3 Master's Report hours (RTF 398R), or additional Elective/Supporting Work course\*\*
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- 60 Total hours (18 classes)

Undergraduate courses:

Of the total of 60 course hours, 9 hours may be from upper-division undergraduate classes (RTF 320 or above). No more than 6 hours in the major are permitted.

RTF 388S:

This course is designed for students working on their thesis projects who need access to production equipment and facilities after completing their required 488M thesis classes. It does not count toward your degree, nor can it be used to rework projects that have already been submitted for a grade in other classes. Note that RTF 388s may be taken more than once.

Credit/No Credit:

Students may only take 12 hours (4 courses) of the required 60 for Credit/No Credit. However, History of Film and the other required production classes may not be taken credit/no credit. Some courses may be restricted to letter-grade basis only. It is the student's responsibility to check the grading status of courses prior to registration.

Independent study courses:

You will take the 488M independent study course in the spring of your third year or in a subsequent semester. In addition, one other independent study (RTF 388) may count toward your degree. However, 388S (which simply permits access to equipment and facilities) will not count toward your degree.

Internships:

Only one 3-credit internship class can count toward your degree.

Required Sequence:

The eleven required production classes (881KA, Editing, Screenwriting, 881KB, Audio, Cinematography, and Producing, along with the three 488M classes and the 488M independent study) and the History of Film class must be taken in sequence during specific semesters as outlined below. Waivers out of these classes based on prior professional or academic work are not permitted. Otherwise, you are free to fulfill your other degree requirements as you see fit, after consultation with the M.F.A. Graduate Adviser and the production faculty. Note that temporary grades of "Incomplete" are not allowed to be given in required first year production courses or in the Spring 488M of year two. For additional information on incompletes, please see the relevant information in "Section IV: Grading."

FALL, YEAR 1:

RTF 380C Screenwriting  
RTF 388P Cinematography  
RTF 390C Editing  
RTF 881KA Directing Documentary

SPRING, YEAR 1:

RTF 385K History of Film  
RTF 390E Audio  
RTF 881KB Directing Narrative

FALL, YEAR 2:

RTF 488M Pre-thesis Production  
Elective or Supporting Work  
Elective or Supporting Work

SPRING, YEAR 2:

RTF 488M Pre-thesis Post-Production  
RTF 388T Producing Film and Television  
Elective or Supporting Work

FALL, YEAR 3:

RTF 488M Thesis Production  
Elective or Supporting Work  
Elective or Supporting Work

SPRING, YEAR 3:

RTF 488M Thesis Post-Production\*  
Master's Report or Elective or Supporting Work\*\*

\*You will sign up for this final 488M as an independent study with your Thesis Committee Chair. Or, with your Thesis Committee Chair's approval, you may take this required independent study in a subsequent semester.

\*\*You have two options here: you may take the Master's Report class and write a thesis report about the experience of making your thesis film. Or you can choose the "Coursework Only" option and take an additional RTF elective or Supporting Work class in this slot. If you choose the Master's Report option please note that the Master's Report class MUST be taken in the final semester before you graduate. The class may be taken multiple times, but only once for credit and it MUST be taken in the semester in which you graduate. The Master's Report class is not considered a production class. It does not give you access to production equipment or post-production facilities or a sound mix.

### **III. Academic Plan of Study Detailed Description**

#### **YEAR 1:**

The primary purpose of the first-year production courses is to prepare M.F.A. students for their pre-thesis and thesis projects. While aesthetics will not be neglected, the emphasis of most courses will be on the mastery of technical skills so that, before moving on to your pre-thesis project, you are confident of both your own skills and those of your classmates, the people who will comprise the majority of your crew on future, larger-scale projects.

Throughout the year, keep in mind that the 881 classes are the place to learn and master new skills, the place for experimentation and for making mistakes. Given the purpose of these courses, you should not have any expectation that what you produce during Year 1 will be suitable for submission to festivals. Projects may indeed exceed these expectations, but student ambitions will not be permitted to conflict with the courses' primary goals. In other words, an incoming student with significant cinematography experience will not be allowed to photograph all of his/her classmates' projects to the detriment of everyone else's camera and lighting skills. Individual and class projects require that students function in a variety of crew roles so that they learn them all.

**RTF 380C (Fall): Screenwriting for Directors.** Though focusing on the short script, 380C explores basic dramatic principles – story, character, and structure – which are applicable to all forms of narrative screenwriting. Students apply these narrative principles to the development of their own original short scripts, with an emphasis on the writing process: from the initial premise, through character exploration and outlining, to drafting and revision. At the end of the semester, students will leave class with short scripts ready to shoot in the spring RTF 881KB narrative production class.

**RTF 390C (Fall): Introduction to Editing.** RTF 390C provides a comprehensive introduction to the principles and techniques of editing media in a variety of settings, with a strong emphasis on the cinematic tradition and its development. Both aesthetic and practical approaches will be addressed through a variety of exercises, and these along with readings, screenings, and group discussion will prepare students for the editing phases of their 881KA projects near the end of the semester.

**RTF 881KA (Fall): Principles of Film and Television Documentary Production.** This course focuses on directing and producing short documentaries. Using a combination of screenings, workshops, discussion and analysis, all in parallel with each student's semester-long documentary project, we will cover aspects of film structure that pertain to both documentary and narrative. Documentary projects, within a range of 10-15 minutes in length, will be completed and screened at semester's end.

**RTF 388P (Fall): Cinematography.** RTF 388P is experimental in nature, with an emphasis on sharpening visual awareness, through practice with a variety of lenses, lighting instruments, cameras, and formats. In order to encourage students to think cinematically in both documentary and dramatic work, a number of exercises will be assigned to help students achieve greater creative and personal expression.

**RTF 385K (Spring): Film History.** RTF 385K is a survey of international film history. The course will focus on the evolution of motion picture technology, the development of the medium as a business and as a mode of artistic expression, the primary artistic film movements, the growth of film genres, and the work of major filmmakers.

**RTF 390E (Spring): Audio for Picture: Production and Post-Production.** This class addresses audio for picture: from conception and pre-production design, through production recording, and on to post-production design and editing. It is an intensive, hands-on introduction to the basics of audio for picture. Listening and imagining are critical, as is learning to operate the machinery. The class will introduce analog and digital recording techniques for picture, as well as digital editing on a Pro Tools workstation. The course is integrated with the two other Spring semester courses, so that you can develop and apply your growing skills within your own projects and those of your cohort.

**RTF 881KB (Spring): Principles of Film and Television Production.** This course is an intensive workshop in narrative directing and film production. Its goal is to develop the ability and self-confidence to translate, from the page to the screen, the narrative and the corresponding visual/aural structures of a scene or short film. The course explores the role of the director in narrative filmmaking and the director's storytelling and aesthetic responsibilities. Investigation of the director/actor relationship will be a priority, and casting, rehearsal technique, acting theory and process, and staging issues will be explored in depth. For the final project, each student will direct and edit an original short film, under seven minutes in length. In addition, each student will fill a number of crew positions on other students' projects. Readings, exercises, screenings and other assignments throughout the semester are designed to sharpen the directors' narrative and visual awareness. Students should plan for the fact that they will be in production on their final film projects during Spring Break week.

**Year-end Review.** At the conclusion of Year 1, you will participate in a faculty review of your first-year work in order to monitor your progress and determine suitability for continuation in the M.F.A. program. Attendance is required of full-time production area faculty, but these reviews are open to any interested faculty and any fellow students you wish to invite. The review will include:

- A. a discussion of your work from your first year, and
- B. faculty review of the narrative script or documentary treatment for the project you intend to shoot as your pre-thesis (qualifying) project in the Fall of your second year.

Your script or treatment must be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator at least one week prior to your review for distribution to the production and screenwriting faculty.

## **YEAR 2:**

**RTF 488M (Fall): Pre-thesis Production.** In contrast to the 881KA/KB classes, the purpose of RTF 488M in the Fall of the second year is quite specific: production of your pre-thesis project. You must complete production prior to the end of the semester. You will receive an Incomplete

should you fail to do so, and you will not be permitted to register for the Spring 488M class (Pre-thesis Post-production) until the Incomplete is cleared from your record. You are not required to write or produce this project, only to direct and edit it. Your pre-thesis must be a complete, stand-alone project, and not an excerpt from a larger work.

Pre-thesis fiction projects shall be under 12 minutes in length, and documentary projects shall not exceed 30 minutes. Please note that departmental planning for equipment and facilities usage is based on these running times.

Selection of your crew is entirely up to you with one exception: all major positions (everything but areas of extreme specialization such as special effects) must be filled by currently enrolled UT-Austin students. In rare cases, exceptions may be made for recent UT grads or in cases where shooting is taking place a significant distance from Austin. However, these exceptions must be cleared ahead of time with your instructor.

Scheduling your shoot will take place on a first come/first signed-up basis, assuming that all pre-production paperwork (including the script/treatment) is in order. Fiction projects are allowed seven days for principal photography, with one equipment check-out. This seven-day period is inclusive of check-out and check-in days—e.g., check-out on a Wednesday and check-in on the following Tuesday—and there will be no exceptions. For documentary projects, the number of shooting days that you are allowed should be negotiated with your instructor. Pick-up days may be petitioned during the Spring 488M class as part of the post-production process, but note that spring check-outs will truly be for pick-ups only, and not for extra production days simply because the footage did not turn out as hoped. Poor planning/coverage on your part during the Fall Semester is not a justification for such pick-ups. Students do not have access to production equipment in the Spring except in connection with such 488M instructor-approved pick-ups.

Locations used in your shooting must be cleared ahead of time with signed location releases. Any shoots taking place outside of Travis County must be cleared in advance with your 488M instructor, the equipment check-out manager, and the production area head.

Equipment check-out requests will not be approved until your instructor signs off on your script or documentary treatment. The remainder of the required paperwork must be submitted at least one week prior to your scheduled check-out, or your check-out will be canceled. Required pre-production paperwork includes:

NARRATIVE:

- A. Lined script
- B. Script breakdown sheets (by scene)
- C. Shot list
- D. Shot plot (map) or storyboards
- E. Budget
- F. Cast and crew list + releases
- G. Schedule

- H. Safety plan (if required). Note that a safety plan is required if ANY scenes feature stunts, pyrotechnics, and/or driving shots where the camera is on or in a moving car. Your safety plan must be approved at least a week ahead of your checkout by your 488M instructor and the College of Communication's Assistant Director of Production Services.

DOCUMENTARY:

- A. Treatment
- B. Shot list
- C. Budget
- D. Crew list + releases
- E. Schedule
- F. Safety plan (if required). Note that a safety plan is required if ANY scenes feature stunts, pyrotechnics, and/or driving shots where the camera is on or in a moving car. Your safety plan must be approved at least a week ahead of your checkout by your 488M instructor and the College of Communication's Assistant Director of Production Services.

Production equipment is allocated in accordance with the Fall Equipment Allocation, which changes from year to year as technology and departmental resources evolve. The Equipment Allocation is available on the RTF website. Please note that until September 30 thesis students will have priority with respect to reserving Cameras, Sound, Lenses and HMIs for fall semester or winter break shoots. Thesis students will not have this priority after September 30.

**RTF 388T (Spring): Producing Film and Television.** RTF 388T will detail the positions of producer and production manager and how things work in the supposedly non-creative side of the entertainment industry. Both independent productions and productions originating in the studio/network system will be covered, as will considerations specific to both fiction and non-fiction productions. The course will focus on the function and duties of a producer as he or she shepherds an idea through a project "life cycle": development, financing, pre-production, production, post-production, marketing and distribution. Particular emphasis will be placed on production management—project budgeting and scheduling – and preparation of thesis film materials.

**RTF 488M (Spring): Pre-thesis Post-Production.** Again, the purpose of this class is quite specific: completion of ALL of the post-production processes of your Pre-thesis piece, including scheduling, editing, music composition if required, sound design and mixing, visual effects work and final onlining. Note that you will not receive a grade for this class until your pre-thesis is completely onlined and mixed. If your film is not finished by the end of the Spring semester, you will receive an Incomplete for the course, you will not be permitted to register for the Thesis Production class the following Fall, and you will be required to register for 388S in subsequent semesters until you complete your Pre-thesis in order to continue in the program. Furthermore, the faculty also reserves the right to withdraw offers of Teaching Assistantships for Year 3.

### **THESIS COMMITTEE SELECTION:**

Throughout Year 1 and the first semester of Year 2, you should consider which faculty members you wish to invite to serve on your thesis committee. The thesis committee consists of three faculty members who serve as counselors with regard to your creative efforts and as jurors of your work:

- The committee supervisor must be a tenured or tenure-track member of the RTF production faculty, meaning the supervisor must have the rank of Assistant Professor or higher.
- Your second committee member can be a member of the production faculty, the studies faculty, or the faculty of another department.
- The Production Area Head and Graduate Advisor will assign a third faculty member to your committee, from within the Production Area. This is done in order to spread the thesis advising workload fairly among faculty and because second year MFA students will not have had a chance to take a class from all production faculty.
- You are allowed to add additional faculty members to your thesis committee as you see fit although committees with more than three members are atypical. Please know that, should you choose the report option, all committee members must sign off on your thesis report.

The names of your thesis committee supervisor and your second committee member should be reported to the Graduate Coordinator's office no later than Spring Break of your second year. Any proposed committee member who is not a UT Assistant Professor, Associate Professor or Professor must be approved for committee service by the RTF Graduate Studies Committee.

### **YEAR-END REVIEW:**

At the conclusion of Year 2, you will meet with your newly-formed thesis committee. Attendance at these reviews is required of your thesis committee members, but the reviews are also open to any interested faculty and any fellow students you may wish to invite. To monitor your progress and determine suitability for continuation in the M.F.A. program, this review will:

- A. assess your second-year creative and academic achievements, and
- B. review the dramatic script or documentary treatment that you intend to shoot as your thesis the following Fall. Your script must be submitted to your review committee at least one week prior to your review.

### **CRAFT SPECIALIZATION:**

Upon the successful completion of Year 2, you have the option of petitioning the production faculty to allow you to substitute craft specialization on a negotiated number of undergraduate thesis or graduate film or video projects in lieu of directing your own third year thesis project. Note that this negotiation will be based on the scope and ambition of each project and your precise role and degree of involvement. Your committee, along with the Production Area Head and the Graduate Advisor, will determine an appropriate plan of work, to equal the challenge of

directing a Thesis film. Areas of craft specialization include editing, cinematography, producing, and audio. You would still be required to take the Year 3 488M classes and either complete RTF 398R, with your thesis report topic being your area of craft specialization, or take an additional RTF Elective or Supporting Work class if you choose the Coursework-Only option. Please do not underestimate the difficulty of finding an appropriate set of suitable projects on which you can work, since any delay in such a project could delay your own progress in the program.

Students who elect this option will have equipment privileges according to their areas of specialization. For example, students who specialize in cinematography will be able to check out camera, lighting and grip equipment for up to twelve days (the same number of days they would be permitted to check out equipment were they *directing* their own narrative thesis film), but they will not be permitted to check out audio equipment or use school editing facilities.

### **YEAR 3:**

**RTF 488M (Fall): Thesis Production.** This is the thesis pre-production and production class. You are not required to write, shoot, produce or edit your thesis project—only to direct it. There are no restrictions with regard to form or genre. Completed fiction theses shall be no longer than 30 minutes in length, and completed documentary theses shall not exceed 60 minutes in length.

Selection of your crew is entirely up to you with one exception: all major crew positions (i.e., everything but areas of extreme specialization such as special effects) must be filled by currently enrolled UT-Austin students. In rare cases, exceptions may be made for recent UT grads or in cases where shooting is taking place a significant distance from Austin. However, these exceptions must be cleared ahead of time with your committee *and* the Production Area Head. Note that some student film competitions (including the Student Emmys and Student Academy Awards) require that students fill all crew roles. In addition, please note that graduate student editing suite access rules have no provision for use of our post-production facilities by anyone who is not a registered student, *under any circumstances*.

Scheduling your shoot will be on a first come/first signed-up basis, assuming that all pre-production paperwork (including your script/treatment) is in order. Fiction projects are allowed up to 12 days for principal photography, with a maximum of two check-outs. Check-out and check-in days for thesis shoots do not count toward your 12 shooting day total. Note: You may not shoot for more than six consecutive days without giving your crew a full day of rest.

For documentary projects, the number of shooting days you are allowed should be negotiated with your Thesis Committee supervisor. Pick-up days may be petitioned from the Production Area Head, with a specific proposal and shooting plan that has been approved by your entire Thesis Committee. However, please note that poor planning/coverage on your part, as with the pre-thesis project, is not a justification for such pick-ups, and that neither your committee nor the Production Area Head can grant extra access to equipment outside of exceptional cases.

Locations used in your shooting must be cleared ahead of time with signed location releases. Any shoots taking place outside of Travis County must be cleared in advance with your Thesis Committee and the equipment check-out manager.

Equipment check-out requests will not be approved until your Committee signs off on your script or documentary treatment. Pre-production paperwork includes:

NARRATIVE:

- A. Lined script
- B. Script breakdown sheets (by scene)
- C. Shot list
- D. Shot plot (map) or storyboards
- E. Budget
- F. Cast and crew list + releases
- G. Schedule
- H. Safety plan (if required). Note that a safety plan is required if ANY scenes feature stunts, pyrotechnics, and/or driving shots where the camera is on or in a moving car. Your safety plan must be approved at least a week ahead of your checkout by your 488M instructor and the College of Communication's Assistant Director of Production Services.

DOCUMENTARY:

- A. Treatment
- B. Shot list
- C. Budget
- D. Crew list + releases
- E. Schedule
- H. Safety plan (if required). Note that a safety plan is required if ANY scenes feature stunts, pyrotechnics, and/or driving shots where the camera is on or in a moving car. Your safety plan must be approved at least a week ahead of your checkout by your 488M instructor and the College of Communication's Assistant Director of Production Services.

Production equipment is allocated in accordance with the Fall Equipment Allocation, which changes from year to year as technology and departmental resources evolve. The Equipment Allocation is available on the RTF website. Please note that until September 30 thesis students will have priority with respect to reserving Cameras, Sound, Lenses and HMIs for fall semester or winter break shoots. Thesis students will not have this priority after September 30.

**RTF 488M (Spring): Practicum in Film and Video Production, Thesis Post-Production.**

This class is an independent study under the supervision of your Thesis Committee Chair. You will meet with your thesis committee on a regular basis throughout the semester.

**RTF 398R (Master's Report) or Coursework-Only Option:** You may take the Master's Report class (RTF 398R) and write a thesis report about the experience of making your thesis film. Or you can choose the "Coursework Only" option and take an additional RTF Elective or Supporting Work class in the spring of your 3<sup>rd</sup> Year. Please note that the Master's Report class **MUST** be taken in the final semester before you graduate. If you choose this option you may take the Master's Report multiple times, but only once for credit and it **MUST** be taken in the

semester in which you graduate. If RTF 398R is not successfully completed in a given semester, the thesis supervisor will assign the student “CR” denoting that the report is “in progress,” however this grade of “CR” will not count towards the student’s program of work. The student will have to register for the class again. Note that a student does not need to be “in residence” in order to take RTF 398R. The Master’s Report class is not considered a production class. It does not give you access to production equipment or post-production facilities or a sound mix.

### **THESIS COMMITTEE SUPERVISION:**

Beginning in the Fall of Year 3, students are required to meet with their Thesis Committee Supervisors at least once-per-month, and with their entire Thesis Committees once-per-semester. The purpose of this schedule is to facilitate regular, productive interaction between students and their committees.

### **YEAR-END REVIEW:**

At the conclusion of Year 3, if you are not scheduled to graduate in May you will participate in a faculty review of your Thesis. Attendance at these reviews is required of your Thesis Committee members, but the reviews are also open to any interested faculty and any fellow students you wish to invite.

Note that under no circumstances will an M.F.A. degree be awarded without:

- A. your *completed* thesis production having been screened in a group meeting with all of your thesis committee members present and giving approval to the production. Note that completion of the thesis project is defined as an onlined, mixed, color-corrected master with all final VFX. Anything less will not be considered complete;
- B. your thesis committee members reporting to the M.F.A. Graduate Coordinator that they have screened your completed Thesis production and that it has their approval;
- C. your completed Master's Report having been approved and signed by all of your thesis committee members, if you choose the Master’s Report Option.

Upon completion of your Thesis work, a copy of your film should be submitted to the RTF Department’s Media Librarian.

## **IV. Grading**

Students must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0. A student who receives a grade lower than a C (including a grade of C-) in a required class will be required to take the class again, and achieve a grade of C or better, prior to graduation. Note carefully that, in the case of the six core, 4-credit hour production classes (881KA, 881KB and the four 488Ms), this effectively means that a student who receives a grade lower than a C in one of these courses will be held back a full year, since these courses must be taken in a specific order, as detailed above. If a student receives a

grade lower than a C in one of the other five required RTF production classes (Cinematography, Editing, Screenwriting, Audio, Producing) or History of Film, the student will be required to take the class again, and achieve a grade of C or higher, during the next long semester (Fall or Spring) in which the course is offered. However, a student who receives a grade lower than a C in Cinematography, Editing, Screenwriting, Audio, Producing or History of Film will nonetheless be permitted to take the next class in the sequence of the 4 credit-hour production classes.

To be considered for a Moody Innovation Fund Award in the second year of the program, a student must earn a “B” or better in each of the first year production courses (881KA and 881KB). To be considered for a Moody Innovation Fund Award in the third year of the program, a student must earn a “B” or better in each of the second year 488M classes.

If course requirements remain unfulfilled at the conclusion of a semester, instructors have the discretion to award a temporary grade of “Incomplete.” However, many instructors will not award an incomplete under any circumstances, and students should never assume that this is an option. Additional rules with regard to grades of Incomplete:

- You may only carry one incomplete at a time.
- Incompletes may not be awarded in the required first year production courses
- An incomplete in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year Fall 488M course must be resolved by the beginning of the next semester (the mid-January start of the Spring semester) in order to be allowed into the 2<sup>nd</sup> year Spring 488M course.
- Incompletes may not be awarded in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year Spring 488M course
- Incompletes awarded in any class other than those noted above must be cleared by the end of the next long semester (Fall or Spring). If you have not completed the required work after one semester, the incomplete remains permanent. Incompletes received for Fall courses must be cleared by the grade reporting date at the end of the following Spring semester. Incompletes received for Spring and Summer courses must be cleared by the grade reporting date at the end of the following Fall semester.

## **V. Employment by the Department**

Employment in the Department, as Teaching Assistants or in other positions, offers M.F.A. students excellent opportunities to hone their technical and teaching skills. However, the Department does not *guarantee* employment to any M.F.A. student. It is very unusual for first-year students to receive offers of employment. Similarly, the Department does not generally hire students after their third year in the program. A number of factors, including academic progress and performance in previous positions, will determine whether the Department offers positions during a student's second and third years in the program. Students who have more than one Incomplete from previous semesters are generally not eligible for employment.

The Department expects all students to demonstrate standard workplace professionalism during their employment here. For example, employees are expected to notify their faculty supervisor of anticipated absences\*, arrange for substitutes as appropriate, and fulfill their required duties during work time instead of working on their own projects, and work until all final projects and

screening masters are delivered at the end of the semester. Employees who fail to meet the appropriate standards will not be reappointed in subsequent semesters.

\* Please note that employees who fail to attend the first class meeting each semester shall forfeit the offer of employment. Employees may not arrange for substitutes at the first class meeting.

## **VI. Production Area Policies**

### **USE OF EQUIPMENT:**

You must examine and test all requested University equipment prior to signing for it and removing it from University grounds. While the RTF technical staff does its best to maintain department equipment and keep it in working order, neither the RTF Department nor the University can be held liable for faulty equipment or the harm it may do to film or other media. At the beginning of every semester, it is the responsibility of each M.F.A. student to obtain, read, and sign the Equipment Check-out Rules document, which details all Department policies and penalties for abuse of these policies. Please bear in mind that you are not the only person in need of equipment and that the equipment is depended upon by other students, undergraduate and graduate, whose projects are every bit as important to them as yours is to you. RTF Department equipment should be given the same care and watched over with the same diligence that you would exercise if you owned or had rented the equipment from a commercial rental house.

You are required to purchase equipment insurance for the use of UT equipment. There is a nominal insurance premium that is required for every production class in which you are enrolled before equipment check-out will be permitted (e.g., two production classes taken during one semester requires two insurance payments). Note that in the event of damage, loss, or theft of RTF equipment, this policy still leaves a substantial deductible that must be paid.

In single-person projects (including Pre-thesis and Thesis projects), equipment damage or loss is to be paid for by the director. In the case of group projects, each member of the group is equally responsible for the damages, and costs will be divided accordingly. It is up to the individual members of the group to decide exactly where responsibility lies and whether certain members of the group should be reimbursed by a particular member or members deemed more culpable.

Equipment damage must be paid within seven calendar days of official notification by the Equipment Check-out area or by the last class day of the semester, whichever comes first. If payment is not made by these deadlines, your student record will be barred and you will no longer be eligible to check out equipment, register for classes, or receive your degree until the damages are paid.

### **COSTS OF PRODUCTION:**

Student production costs are borne by the student. You are urged – as in the professional world – to take a hard look at your resources and means and plan accordingly.

### **AWARDS:**

All awards, award monies and/or proceeds of any sale of student projects belong to the student. The only exceptions to this policy lie in the case of sponsored projects. Those considering such projects should make sure these issues are resolved in writing prior to taking them on.

### **YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES:**

While the faculty acknowledges the often all-consuming nature of filmmaking, the work that you do on your own projects (or on your fellow students' projects) should never be used as an excuse to ignore or skip your other classroom obligations or your obligations as a Teaching Assistant. It is your responsibility to make arrangements to cover your other obligations when they come into conflict with your production work.

### **LEAVES OF ABSENCE:**

Students desiring a leave of absence must petition the Graduate Advisor for MFA students. During Years 1 and 2, leaves will be granted for serious personal emergencies only. This is an extremely rare occurrence. If you are granted a leave, your readmission to the program is guaranteed, but because our MFA classes max at 12 students, your return may be delayed until there is an opening available. Leaves for professional opportunities will only be granted after the successful completion of Year 2 of the program.

### **ORIGINAL WORK:**

It is expected that the films you make in this program will be new projects. That is, you will not receive academic credit or departmental support for finishing a film that you started prior to matriculation in the MFA program in Film and Media Production.

### **UT TRADEMARKS AND LANDMARKS:**

You may not film identifiable UT landmarks, signage, logos, and uniforms without prior permission. Examples of UT Landmarks include the Tower and the Stadium. Email [trademarks@utexas.edu](mailto:trademarks@utexas.edu) to request approval and include the following in your request:

- Course title, course number, and name of the class instructor.
- Stills or links to clips of the landmarks, signage, logos or uniforms you propose to film.
- Information about future plans for the film (e.g. possible submission to film festivals).

It normally takes 3-5 days to receive a reply. If approval is not granted, please see Bert Herigstad in the RTF office or call him at 512-471-4071 to discuss other options.

Note regarding “in-class” exercises and non-screened class assignments:

- Most areas around campus are OK to film.

- Incidental shots of campus landmarks may be OK so long as they are used for educational purposes only, i.e., class assignments, and are not publicly screened.

## **VII. Applicability**

This edition of the Handbook applies to the class of M.F.A. production students entering in the Fall of 2018.

## **VIII. Petitions and Waivers**

With regard to the above policies, rules and regulations, the faculty recognizes that extenuating circumstances may, on occasion, prevent adherence to our prescribed plan of study. With that in mind, the faculty reserves the right to waive or modify any of the aforementioned policies or rules if it deems that a particular situation warrants such an action. No student, however, should formulate an academic plan based on anticipation of such a waiver, and any student who does so does so at his/her own risk. Petitions for a waiver of departmental policy must be submitted in writing, or via e-mail, to the Graduate Adviser for the Department's M.F.A. programs.

## **IX. Certification**

I have read the 2018-19 Edition of the Handbook of the Master of Fine Arts Program in Film and Media Production and have reviewed carefully:

- the Film and Media Production program plan of study,
- its associated policies on grading and teaching assistantships,
- the descriptions and requirements of relevant RTF courses, and
- the policies, rules and regulations of the RTF Department,

and I agree to abide by them.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student signature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student name (printed)