

# MASTER OF FINE ARTS IN CINEMA

The M.F.A. in Cinema is intended for individuals who wish to pursue independent film and media production. A 60-unit terminal degree, the program offers students the opportunity to focus on any/all of the following areas: documentary, experimental and/or fiction.

Applicants must have a GPA of 3.0 in the last two years of undergraduate study. Applicants with degrees in areas other than film who show exceptional potential will be considered for admission to the program.

Applicants must meet all general university requirements for admission. Prior to admission, all candidates must have completed two courses in cinema studies beyond the introductory level. One of these courses must be in critical theory, stressing critical approach or methodology; the other must be in cinema history. One introductory course in film production and a basic course in non-linear digital editing, or equivalent experience is required. Students will be expected to use Adobe's Premiere Pro for initial coursework.

Questions about the application process and materials can be directed to the School of Cinema graduate advisor at [cinegrad@sfsu.edu](mailto:cinegrad@sfsu.edu) and/or to the Division of Graduate Studies at [gradstudies@sfsu.edu](mailto:gradstudies@sfsu.edu).

## Application Procedures

The School of Cinema accepts new M.F.A. students for the fall term only.

To apply to the M.F.A. in Cinema, you must complete the Cal State Apply application for graduate admission and upload your unofficial transcripts and application documents to the Program Materials section of Cal State Apply. **You must complete the entire graduate admission by the deadline to be considered for admission.** Applicants may only apply to a single graduate program per application term. Pay the \$55 application fee.

Application for admission requires two distinct processes:

After reviewing the Application Procedures below, please visit Cal State Apply to apply for the M.F.A. in Cinema.

## Application Instructions

Your application for graduate study to SF State consists of a two-part review:

### Part One: Division of Graduate Studies

The Division of Graduate Studies reviews your application for general university admission requirements and requires you to upload copies of transcripts from every college or university attended, including study abroad coursework, community college coursework even if transfer credit appears on your degree transcript. Upload clear, legible copies of all transcripts to the Documents section of the Cal State Apply (<https://www2.calstate.edu/apply/>) Application. Photos of documents will not be accepted. Make sure you resolve any financial obligations at previously attended institutions so they will release your transcripts.

Graduate Admissions  
San Francisco State University  
1600 Holloway Ave., ADM 250  
San Francisco, CA 94132  
Phone: (415) 338-2234  
Email: [gradstudies@sfsu.edu](mailto:gradstudies@sfsu.edu)

### Part Two:

Applicants must have a GPA of 3.0 in the last two years of undergraduate study. Applicants with degrees in areas other than film who show exceptional potential will be considered for admission to the program. Prior to admission, all candidates must have completed two courses in cinema studies beyond the introductory level. One of these courses must be in critical theory, stressing critical approach or methodology; the other must be in cinema history. One introductory course in film production and a basic course in non-linear digital editing, or equivalent experience is required. Students will be expected to use Adobe's Premiere Pro for initial coursework. The GRE is NOT required to apply. Please upload additional required documents in the Documents section of this application.

School of Cinema  
San Francisco State University  
1600 Holloway Ave.  
Fine Arts Building, Room 245  
San Francisco, CA 94132  
Phone: (415) 338-1629  
Email: [cinegrad@sfsu.edu](mailto:cinegrad@sfsu.edu)

## Materials Needed to Apply

Prepare application materials in advance before starting the online Cal State Apply application. Please note that the School of Cinema Application Materials can be submitted on the Cal State Apply Application in the "Program Materials" section of the application. Please be aware that there are four tabs in this section of the application, Home, Documents, Evaluations, and Questions. Your Program Materials for the School of Cinema will be submitted within these tabs of the application.

## Required Application Documents Breakdown

- A resume** (1-2 pages) summarizing the applicant's education, awards or recognition, work experience, travel, languages, and special skills.
- A personal statement** (3-page maximum) discussing aesthetic influences, creative interests, and professional aspirations as a filmmaker, including comments on: the areas of film on which the applicant would like to concentrate, how theory informs his/her work as a filmmaker, and the goals he/she intends to pursue upon completion of the M.F.A.
- An example of academic writing** (7-12 pages) which illustrates the applicant's ability to make and support a thesis as well as familiarity with scholarly form and expository style. Papers from the film discipline are most useful, but other academic work is acceptable. No journalistic "review" essays or scripts are accepted.
- An example of creative moving image work** submitted on VIMEO, YouTube or other online link is required (five minutes maximum). One example of moving image work is required. This sample can be a single work, or excerpts of several of your works, whichever you feel best represents your creative vision. If a sample of work submitted is longer than five minutes, it may not be viewed in its entirety. Please do not submit trailers. Examples of other creative work, such as photographs, paintings, or creative writing are accepted. Please email the Cinema Department office with any questions at [cinedept@sfsu.edu](mailto:cinedept@sfsu.edu).
- Two letters of recommendation** from individuals who can attest to the applicant's creativity and aptitude as well as to the quality of past work and potential of future achievements. One letter from a former professor is recommended. The department does not provide official recommendation forms. Your recommender will receive an email with a link to upload a reference letter once the School of Cinema Application letter has been completed.

- f. **Unofficial transcripts:** Upload two unofficial transcripts to the Cal State Apply application.

In addition to any documents required by your program, you are also required to upload legible unofficial copies of transcripts from each college or university attended. Including study abroad coursework or community college coursework, even if this coursework appears as transfer credit appears on your degree transcript. Full academic disclosure is required. Photographs or screenshots of transcripts will be rejected. An incomplete academic history will significantly delay review of your application. The Division of Graduate Studies may request official transcripts from you at any point during the application review process.

If selected for admission, you will be required to submit official transcripts to the Division of Graduate Studies to secure your offer of admission.

Additional information about submitting application materials is available on the Cinema Department website: [www.cinema.sfsu.edu](http://www.cinema.sfsu.edu) (<http://www.cinema.sfsu.edu>).

## Program Learning Outcomes

- Produce individual creative cinematic works utilizing techniques that span a range of modes, styles and genres.
- Master pre-production, production and post-production skills necessary for cinematic expression.
- Realize a personal creative vision in the cinematic medium.
- Write coherent critical essays using appropriate historical and theoretical materials.
- Gain teaching-related experience.

## Completion of the Degree

Under certain circumstances, up to 24 units of graduate credit from an M.A. program in film production may be applied toward the M.F.A. Before any such request is considered, all admission requirements must be met and all previous coursework must be reviewed and approved by the Cinema graduate committee and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Enrollment in an upper-division or graduate-level cinema course must be continuous until graduation. Registration may be in a regular university course, summer session course, or College of Professional & Global Education's LCA 499, which satisfies the University's continuous enrollment requirement for graduate students.

## Written English Proficiency Requirement

### Level One

First-level proficiency is assessed using written work completed in the critical theory course taken in the first semester of the M.F.A. program. This course must be completed with an overall grade of B or better.

### Level Two

Second-level proficiency is assessed using the creative work proposal normally prepared in CINE 770.

## Advancement to Candidacy

Students must meet all general university requirements, receive a "B" or better in all required courses for the M.F.A. degree, and successfully pass all formal reviews (first-year script review, first-year progress review, thesis proposal review and thesis committee review) for advancement to candidacy.

- Produce individual creative film works utilizing techniques that span a range of genres.
- Demonstrate mastery of technical skills necessary to express themselves cinematically.
- Demonstrate the realization of a personal creative vision in the medium of film.
- Demonstrate the ability to locate their personal creative practice in the context of history and traditions of cinema.
- Produce coherent critical essays using appropriate source materials.
- Demonstrate skills in teaching undergraduate film courses.
- Students must take two critical theory courses from the following list by the spring semester of their second year.
- Students must take CINE 726 during the spring semester of their second year.

## Cinema (M.F.A.) – 60 units

All M.F.A. students must complete 42 units of required classes (Core, Theory Electives, and Production Electives) plus an additional 18 units of electives over three distinct years for a total of 60 units. During the first year, students build a foundation through the study of technical crafts, aesthetics, theory and creative conceptualization – enabling them to express themselves in the language of images and sounds. In the second year, students take advanced courses that lead to the production of creative work demonstrating original thinking, conceptual clarity, technical skill and the refinement of a personal aesthetic. In the third year, students complete a creative project that is a culmination of previous work and a reflection of the development of the student's creative voice.

First and second-year required courses must be taken in sequence.

Advancement to the second and third year of the program is contingent on faculty review and approval by the M.F.A. coordinator. Completion of CINE 852 is the prerequisite of taking any paid position.

## Core (27 units)

Code	Title	Units
CINE 701	Creative Process I	3
CINE 702	Creative Process II	3
CINE 710	Production Practice I	3
CINE 711	Production Practice II	3
CINE 712	Production Practice III	3
CINE 726	Cinema Theory II	3
CINE 770	Film Production Research	3
CINE 852	Directed Experience in Film Education	3
CINE 894	Creative Work Project	3

## Theory Electives (9 units)

Select three:

Code	Title	Units
CINE 720	Critical Paradigms and the Cinematic	3
CINE 721	Cinematic Documentary	3
CINE 723	Cinema Forms and Aesthetics	3
CINE 727	Cinematic Styles, Forms and Movements	3
CINE 728	Cinema Histories	3
CINE 741	Cinema and the City	3
CINE 743	Sexuality in the Cinema	3
CINE 747	Postcolonial Cinema	3

CINE 748	Cinema and Cultural Studies	3
CINE 749	Critical Practices	3
CINE 820	Seminar in Critical Theory	3

### Production Electives (6 units)

Select two:

Code	Title	Units
CINE 713	Visual Effects Workshop	3
CINE 715	Cinematography Workshop	3
CINE 730	Experimental Cinema Workshop	3
CINE 740	Workshop in Documentary Production	3
CINE 755	Feature Screenwriting	3
CINE 761	Directing for Cinema	3
CINE 762		
CINE 763		

### Additional Cinema Electives (18 units)

Selected on advisement.

### Additional Requirements

In addition to the required courses noted above, each student must meet departmental requirements for periodic reviews, as follows:

- Formal script review at the end of the first semester.
- Formal progress review at the end of the first year.
- Formal presentation and faculty evaluation of the creative work project proposal at the end of the second year (upon which advancement to candidacy is contingent).
- Documented public screening of the student's creative thesis project.