FILM AND TELEVISION FOUNDATIONS

YEAR-LONG, PART-TIME FILMMAKING COURSE
SEMESTER ONE: 13 WEEKS - EARLY MARCH TO EARLY JUNE

LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS, DISCOVER & EXPLORE

Classes run on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6:30pm to 9:30pm - plus some weekends. For exact dates please refer to our website: vca.unimelb.edu.au/ftv/shortcourses

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WRITING FOR THE SCREEN

4 sessions
Participants explore the writing process, creation and development of stories for the screen.

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THE ACTOR/DIRECTOR RELATIONSHIP

3 sessions
A dynamic series of lectures and workshops where participants are introduced to a range of experienced directors and professional actors – demystifying the language and learning the tools that will enhance your casting and directing process.

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PRODUCING

1 session: full day, Saturday
What is the difference between an executive, creative, associate or line producer? What does a producer bring to a project and what should you bring to a producer? An intensive all day session designed to demystify and clarify this highly creative and essential role.

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FROM SCRIPT TO SCREEN

4 sessions
An examination of key crew roles - from pre-production, production to post-production, industry heads of department will discuss the practical problems and the creative solutions involved in enabling a film to move from script to screen.

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THE VISION OF CINEMA

4 sessions
Discover the secrets of the cinematographer’s art from highly experienced industry professionals - lighting, framing, movement, lens techniques, visual design and communication. Includes one evening and an all day introductory practical session on basic lighting principals, onset safe practice and camera operation in our state of the art film studios.

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FILM IN FULL

2 sessions: (Saturdays)
Sit back in our Grant St Cinema and enjoy in full the films referenced, shot, recorded, designed, produced or directed by our lecturers. An opportunity for informal discussion with your coordinator, one of the course lecturers or your fellow class-mates.

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SHOOT IT!

1 session: full day, Saturday
What is the role of the armourer? A detailed session with top industry armourer John Fox covering all of the safety and legal requirements and issues involved when choosing to use weapons in your films – includes firing of film industry blank ammunition (revolvers, pistols, machineguns) – not for the squeamish!

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FILM BYTES

2 sessions
Neo-realism to documentary. Realist mise-en-scène – from Rome Open City to Roma, an exploration of form, style and technique – from the filmmaker’s perspective.

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‘IN THE CAN’

2 sessions
What makes a successful short film? What sort of films are successful and why? Screenings of past students’ major films and Super 8 productions. Briefing on weekend practical workshop structures and protocols – includes a Q & A session with previous Foundation students. An opportunity to immerse yourself in short films, to share, learn from, and to celebrate the achievements of past students - to inspire the new!

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EASTER BREAK: NO CLASSES ON 3 CONSECUTIVE EVENINGS DURING THIS PERIOD

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SUPER 8: THEORY AND PRACTICE

2 sessions
An introduction to Super 8 film-making. Lecture based instruction incorporated with practical weekend workshops. Participants have the opportunity to write, direct and shoot their own short Super 8 film – culminating in a screening of all works produced in our Grant St Cinema. Participants take home a DVD copy of all of the films produced within the workshop.

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SUPER 8 SHOOTS

1 session: weekend workshop
Working in groups of 6, students write, produce and direct their own Super 8 film. Choose from one of three shoot days (feel free to contribute by doing additional crewing on the days you aren’t shooting your own film!).

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SHORT FILM CASE STUDIES

2 sessions
For decades filmmakers have commenced their filmmaking journey via making short films: a celebrated form in its own right and a stepping-stone to feature films. Meet several acclaimed national and international (award winning) filmmakers and examine in detail the process of making a short film from idea to screen, and beyond. Discover how short filmmaking helped forge the path for these filmmakers to move into this exciting and challenging industry.

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THE SOUND OF CINEMA

3 sessions
Why is the shower scene from Psycho so violent? What makes people cry in Casablanca? How does sound and music combine with image to create the full cinematic experience? The art and craft of location sound recording, composing and sound design taught by highly experienced industry professionals.

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INTRODUCTION TO SCREEN NARRATIVE

1 session
What is a ‘screen story’? An overview will be offered of the key structural components that make up a screen narrative. Topics covered will include plot/story/narration; the use of binary oppositions and motif; the move from classical Hollywood narrative to a more open, post-classical mode.

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END OF SEMESTER:
EARLY JUNE, SUPER 8 SCREENING LAUNCH.

MID YEAR BREAK: CLASSES RESUME EARLY JULY.

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SEMESTER TWO: CREATE!!
16 WEEKS - EARLY JULY TO DECEMBER — END OF YEAR SCREENING MID DECEMBER

This semester is heavily production based – the class will be divided into small groups for the first 6 weeks of this semester for a variety of workshops including shooting, editing and 2 x script tutorial sessions aimed at developing a solid script for our major productions (which dominates the schedule for the 2nd half of this intensive semester). You will have some week nights where no official class runs (for your tutorial/shoot group) as more weekend days are required during this production semester (depending on your groups individual schedule). Where you choose to schedule your major production will determine your end of semester date ie: if you shoot early in the schedule and choose not to crew on other productions you could complete the semester early November, conversely if you choose to crew on numerous productions and shoot late in the shooting schedule you could complete the year in early December.

BLACK BOOTS (FILMMAKING EXERCISE)
THE BRIEF, DEVELOPMENT & PRE-PRODUCTION

2 sessions
Each student writes, directs and edits their own individual short film during this camera workshop. An opportunity to familiarize yourself with both the creative and technical tools you access for your major production. Study the previous works generated for Black Boots. Structure and aims of the Boots process are discussed – crews are locked in. Pre-production checklists are covered and post production requirements are introduced.

WRITING FOR THE SCREEN PART 2

4 sessions including tutorials
We continue the study of the film writer's craft. Students produce two film ideas (a simple 1 to 2 minute outline) for the upcoming Boots Shoot plus work commences on your major production (3 to 5 minute) script - delivering 1st and 2nd drafts in preparation for our production period. 1st draft is due in July. 2nd draft is due late August – exact dates TBA.

VISUALISING FOR EDITING/CREATIVE PRE-PRODUCTION

2 sessions
Visualising the finished film starts with scripting and continues through the shoot and into the edit. We look at ways to convey the director's vision to the rest of the creative team, including the relative merits of marked-up scripts, shooting diagrams and storyboards.

BLACK BOOTS - PRODUCTION/SHOOTS

Full Weekend
In small crews students direct their own individual short film exercise. Each participant writes, produces and directs their own 1 to 2 minute short film and crews on a minimum of four other productions in the camera, sound, art or lighting department.

INTRODUCTION TO EDITING ON AVID

2 sessions: (includes 1 x weekend day)
Using the footage shot during your Boots Shoots - assembly to fine cut. Training on the AVID non-linear editing system accessing your own individual workstation. No prior editing experience is required.

FILM IN FULL PART 2

1 session
Enjoy the films referenced, analyzed or contributed to by our lecturers. An opportunity for informal discussion with your coordinator, one of the course lecturers and your fellow class-mates.

SCREENING - BLACK BOOTS

Sit back and enjoy the fruits of your labour - a night to celebrate - the Premier Screening of your Boots shoots. Enjoy!!

THE VISION OF CINEMA PART 2

2 sessions
We continue the exploration of cinematography. Includes detailed discussion with a panel of experts on various camera technologies, lens', style and production strategies.

FROM SCRIPT TO SCREEN PART 2

3 sessions
A continuation of the examination of key crew roles – speakers will demystify the essentials of pre-production, legals (including copyright), production and location management.

HOW TO APPLY

1 session
Designed for students aiming to move into full-time study at VCA Film and Television. The undergraduate and postgraduate/masters coordinators join us to discuss just what it takes to produce a successful application and interview presentation. Examples of successful applications are shared. This session is designed to ensure VCA Foundation's students are able to produce applications and interview presentations of the highest standard.

MID SEMESTER BREAK – 1 WEEK, END OF AUGUST

THE SOUND OF CINEMA PART 2

2 sessions
We continue the exploration of sound in cinema.

SAFE SET PRACTICES, PRE-PRODUCTION AND PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT

Working in small groups, lead by your coordinator, the production management requirements of your film are discussed in detail. This module will assist you in realizing your film in a safe, economical and practical manner. Creative solutions for challenging concepts are explored. Processes for effective scheduling, contracting, risk assessment and safety reporting commence. Call-sheet generation and post-production schedules are discussed and locked down.

THE ACTOR/DIRECTOR RELATIONSHIP PART 2

3 sessions
Casting/auditions/rehearsals/blocking/the director’s role in pre-production. Through a series of intensive workshops we ensure you are prepared and informed so you can realize your full potential as a director.

WEEKEND COMPONENT: date TBA
Guided by an experienced director students workshop with professional actors, honing their directorial skills in a challenging yet supportive environment.

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

Pre-production & Production
It’s time to flex those well developed filmmaking muscles! Over a 10 week intensive production period each student will produce and direct their own 3 to 5 minute HDV production. Accessing state of the art facilities and equipment, it’s time to create and share your vision! All equipment, stock and production facilities are included in the course costs. It is not a requirement that you crew on other productions but it is encouraged.

AVID: POST PRODUCTION

7 sessions including 3 x weekend days
All students access their own offline suite fully post-producing their short film. Includes a final session in our online suite (with an operator) adding credits/ titles, colour grading and/or adding any final FX to ensure you walk away with a highly polished final film.
You made it - literally!

All major works are screened at the state of the art screening facilities at Federation Hall. The culmination of a year's work.

Testimonials

Past Student Comments:

“A fantastic introduction to film, covering both theoretical and practical aspects. A wonderful opportunity to meet other aspiring film-makers, to learn together and to make films! An impressive selection of lecturers drawn from the Film & TV industry and lots of opportunities to ask questions.”

Julianne Deeb, Director and Producer, went on to complete her Postgraduate in Documentary within our full-time program. She has since worked on numerous productions including Assistant Producer on Surf Patrol. Production Manager on the SBS funded documentary series 'The Naked Lentil' and is the Industry Programs Officer at Film Victoria.

“I couldn’t imagine a better introduction to filmmaking. I had the opportunity to meet and work with some of Australia’s best filmmakers, technicians and actors. I had a vague hope that one day I might make a film. I had no experience and had never even done photography. A few days ago three hundred people watched my first film on the big screen. I was terrified but it has totally changed my life. I did it! It’s a full-on year, working full time and studying, but I found the lectures so inspiring that, for me, it was my relaxation and escape...an incredibly supportive environment...”

Mary Mason, Designe

“I remember in the first lesson of the VCA Foundation year in 2001 learning that you shoot one shot in a scene, then you move the camera somewhere else, & shoot another shot, & then you cut the shots together to make the scene. This blew my mind, such were the novice skills I was operating before taking the Foundation course. Learning the language & grammar of filmmaking in the coming months continued to blow my mind as well, such was the high level of intimate teaching from the industry practitioners we were blessed to meet & learn from. I have now 10 years later had the privilege of traveling all around the globe working, & have seen how film education happens the world over. I honestly couldn’t imagine a better way to learn the A-Z of filmmaking in a single year involving a strong practical element that the VCA Foundation year offers. It is rare that at a novice level you can be surrounded in such a supportive environment by other like-minded people and have the luxury of taking your filmmaking seriously. The way the course is structured allows you to find out who you are as a unique screen artist & to develop a language as to why that is. What more could you ask of an institution? I have no hesitation in fully recommending this course to anyone interesting in learning more about film or keen on entering the film industry in any capacity”

Adam Arkapaw, Cinematographer, Snowtown, Blind Company, Lore & Animal Kingdom

“While I was doing the Foundations course I had the good fortune to work on an SBS series - a year later I’m in Sydney rigging cameras on cars for a Korean car commercial, six months later I’m scampering around city rooftops with camera cranes at night shooting action sequences for the latest Hollywood blockbuster... it’s been an awesome ride! The Foundations course is great at providing a broad, hands-on knowledge of film-making - and for me, the spark of inspiration to start an exciting new career”

Steve Robinson, Grip, has worked on Feature Films, TVC’s and Television Series including Ghost Rider, Where the Wild Things Are, City Homicide, Rush & Offspring

Guest Speakers/Tutors

Foundations has secured itself a reputation for providing students with a wide variety of world class guest speakers – from local emerging talent through to highly experienced film practitioners and film educators. This is reflected in the works produced by our guest lecturers. Writers, producers, directors, sound recordists, production designers, cinematographers, editors, composers (and more) all share their experiences and insights with Foundation students. Some examples of television and feature film works the Foundations guest lecturers to date have contributed to follows: Mary & Max, Kenny, Ghost Rider, Pacific, Noise, Breaker Morant, The Castle, Lord of the Rings, Romper Stomper, Where the Wild Things Are, Mad Max, Animal Kingdom, Everyday, Everynight, Wog Boy, Chopper, Ned Kelly, Charlotte Web, The Boys, City Homicide, Summer Heights High, Offspring, Killer Elite, Rush, Satisfaction, Angry Boys, Charlie and Boots, the Last Ride, Monty Python’s And Now for Something Completely Different - to name but a handful!

Fees:

Foundations offers 3 payment options, our Early-bird discount rate, the standard yearly rate, or you can opt to pay Semester by Semester. Please refer to our website for the cost of the course for next year and the cut off date for the Early-bird discount. vca.unimelb.edu.au/ftv/shortcourses/

Please Note:

Completion of semester one is a pre-requisite for entry into semester two.

All Foundation students who successfully complete the year will receive a Certificate of Completion and take home a DVD of all the works generated throughout the year (3 films are written and directed by each student). This course is an up-front fee paying course.

How to Apply:

For enquires please contact the course coordinator.
Email: vca-ftvshortcourses@unimelb.edu.au
Phone: +61 3 9035 9033
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