SCREEN CULTURES

Degree Types: PhD

The Screen Cultures PhD Program (https://screencultures.northwestern.edu/) continues Northwestern's historical leadership in the cultural and critical analysis of film, television, and emerging media by integrating interdisciplinary opportunities both within the School of Communication and across the University. A humanities-based program grounded in critical and cultural theory, cultural history, and media poetics, Screen Cultures conducts and mentors research in the history and critical analysis of media texts, technologies, and cultures.

The program is designed to provide in-depth knowledge of the field of film and media while allowing students to develop and design interdisciplinary research by taking coursework and attending events in other programs across the humanities and social sciences.

Students work with faculty across campus and with internationally known scholars in film and media studies. In addition to core subjects, students can also enroll in specialty seminars with topics such as: race and media studies, feminism and media culture, postcolonial film theory, media places, media and the environment, transnational television and film, unethical media, nostalgia and its discontents, science fiction film and television, cinema and time, sound media, and numerous author and genre courses.

The program is enhanced by our Center for Screen Cultures and a quarterly colloquium series, which hosts visiting lecturers and events.

Additional resources:

- Program website (https://screencultures.northwestern.edu/)
- Program Handbook

Degree Offered

- Screen Cultures PhD (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/tgs/screen-cultures/screen-cultures-phd/)

Learning objective(s)/Students should be able to…

- Contribute new creative ideas to the field of film, television, and media studies in the form of a PhD. dissertation; successfully teach undergraduate and/or graduate courses; present work at conferences; and publish written and/or video essays. The program prepares students for the academic job market as well as alternative career paths, such as film programming or positions at museums and archives.

Screen Cultures Courses

The following course list includes all courses taught at the graduate level in the Radio/Television/Film department; Screen Cultures students must consult with their advisor about the appropriateness of any screenwriting or production course.

RTVF 310-0 Television History (1 Unit)
Political, cultural, social, and industrial history of television, from the classic network era to the post-network contemporary period of media convergence. Exploration of programs as well as major events and shifts in television history.
Historical Studies Distro Area

RTVF 312-1 History of Film I (1 Unit)
International survey of motion pictures as a distinctive medium of expression from its prehistory to the present.
Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

RTVF 312-2 History of Film II (1 Unit)
International survey of motion pictures as a distinctive medium of expression from its prehistory to the present.
Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

RTVF 313-1 Doc Film History & Criticism (1 Unit)
Survey of the schools, styles, and purposes of documentary film as a unique form of artistic expression and sociopolitical persuasion.
Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

RTVF 313-2 Documentary Film & Video (1 Unit)
Contemporary work and issues in documentary film and video.
Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

RTVF 314-0 History of the Recording Industry (1 Unit)
Exploration of the history of the recording industry from the invention of the phonograph in 1877 to recent developments in digital audio.

RTVF 315-0 Audio Drama (1 Unit)
Introduction to masterpieces of audio and radio drama in three historical periods: classic American (1937-54); mid-century British (1954-1974) and contemporary global traditions.

RTVF 316-0 Media and Cultural Theory (1 Unit)
Introduction to the critical analysis of film, television, and other popular media by surveying influential theories of media, culture, and power.

RTVF 321-0 Radio/Tv/Film Authorship (1 Unit)
Idea of authorship in the media and an examination of different uses of author theory related to the work of particular artists.
Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

RTVF 322-0 Radio/Television/Film Genre (1 Unit)
Concept of genre in the media, with reference to popular American forms.
Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

RTVF 325-0 Film, Media & Gender (1 Unit)
Explores issues of gender in film and media. Introduces students to major debates and theories regarding gender and sexuality in the media.

RTVF 326-0 Film & TV Criticism (1 Unit)
Contemporary critical methods applied to film and/or television. Students read literature on critical methods and analysis and write critical analyses of films and television programs.
Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

RTVF 330-0 Culture Industries (1 Unit)
Overview of business and social organization of film and television industry. Introduction to how media industries produce cultural products for local, national, and transnational audiences.

RTVF 341-0 Technological Innovations (1 Unit)
How technology develops and is assimilated into mass media.

RTVF 345-0 History of Hollywood Cinema (1 Unit)
Overview of the development of the classical Hollywood cinema, with particular emphasis on the 1920s through the early 1960s. Explores the relationship between industry practices and aesthetic features of classical narrative film genres.

RTVF 351-0 National Cinema (1 Unit)
Historical aspects of cinema in a culture outside the United States or a social/cultural/intellectual movement within cinema's general evolution.

RTVF 353-0 Film, Media, and Globalization (1 Unit)

Explores theories of media's role in the globalization of cultures. Examines transnational production, marketing, and reception of film, television, and/or digital media.

RTVF 358-0 Topics in Improv (1 Unit)
In-depth study and practice of improv techniques and aesthetics. Sample topics include Intro to Improv, Improvising Characters, Writing and Performing Stand-up, Writing with Improv, Improvising the Text-based Collaborative Show, Improvised Comedy Web Series.

RTVF 360-0 Topics in Media Writing (1 Unit)
Various approaches to screenwriting, emphasizing different modes and genres, such as the short film, the feature film, screenplays based on preexisting material, the teen film, interactive computer scenarios. May be repeated for credit, depending on the change in topic.
Prerequisite: RTVF 260-0.

RTVF 363-0 Writing the TV Pilot (1 Unit)
Students will learn the craft of writing a television pilot in this small, workshop-based course.
Prerequisite: RTVF 260-0.

RTVF 364-0 Writing the Feature (1 Unit)
Students will learn the craft of writing a feature film in this small, workshop-based course.
Prerequisite: RTVF 260-0.

RTVF 365-0 Writing the Adaptation (1 Unit)
Students will learn the craft of writing an adaptation in this small, workshop-based course.
Prerequisite: RTVF 260-0.

RTVF 370-0 Topics in Pre-Production (1 Unit)
In-depth study of preproduction film, video, and media techniques and aesthetics. Sample topics include storyboarding, producing, and motion graphics.
Prerequisites: RTVF 190-0 and second-year standing (not through AP credits).

RTVF 372-0 Editing (1 Unit)
The technique and art of editing for film. Topics include editing for continuity, controlling pace and rhythm, and editing nonlinear narratives.
Prerequisites: RTVF 190-0 and second-year standing (not through AP credits).

RTVF 373-0 Topics in Sound (1 Unit)
In-depth study of sound techniques and aesthetics.
Prerequisites: RTVF 190-0 and second-year standing (not through AP credits).

RTVF 374-0 Topics in Cinematography (1 Unit)
In-depth study of cinematography techniques and aesthetics.
Prerequisites: RTVF 190-0 and second-year standing (not through AP credits).

RTVF 376-0 Topics in Interactive Media (1 Unit)
Exploration of the techniques and aesthetics of interactivity using various media.
Prerequisites: RTVF 190-0, second-year standing (not through AP credits), and consent of instructor.

RTVF 377-0 Topics in Non-fiction Media (1 Unit)
In-depth study of nonfiction media techniques and aesthetics.
Prerequisites: 190 and second-year standing (not through AP credits).

RTVF 378-0 Topics in Post-Production (1 Unit)
In-depth study of postproduction film, video, and media techniques and aesthetics. Sample topics include color correction, special-effects cinematography, and finishing.
Prerequisites: RTVF 190-0 and second-year standing (not through AP credits).

RTVF 379-0 Topics in Film/Video/Audio Production (1 Unit)
In-depth study and practice of one area of film, video, or television. May be taken more than once for credit, depending on changes in topic.
Prerequisites: RTVF 190-0 and second-year standing (not through AP credits).

RTVF 380-0 Cinematography - Film (1 Unit)
Techniques, aesthetics, and technologies of lighting for cinema using film and film cameras.

RTVF 381-0 Cinematography - Digital (1 Unit)
Techniques, aesthetics, and technologies of lighting and digital camera skills.
Prerequisites: RTVF 190-0 and second-year standing (not through AP credits).

RTVF 383-0 Introduction to Sound Production (1 Unit)
Introduction to the theories and principles of basic sound production. Demos, lectures, readings, screenings, and exercises cover all basics of sound recording technology.
Prerequisite: RTVF 190-0.

RTVF 384-0 Introduction to Sound Postproduction (1 Unit)
Introduction to the theories and principles of basic sound production. Demos, lectures, readings, screenings, and exercises cover all basics of sound recording technology.
Prerequisites: RTVF 190-0 and second-year standing (not through AP credits).

RTVF 390-0 Topics in Directing (1 Unit)
Single-camera dramatic directing, including visualization and breakdown of scripts, camera blocking, and working with actors.
Prerequisites: RTVF 190-0 and second-year standing (not through AP credits).

RTVF 392-0 Documentary Production (1 Unit)
Students examine documentary practices and produce their own shorts.
Prerequisites: RTVF 190-0 and second-year standing (not through AP credits).

RTVF 393-0 2D Computer Animation (1 Unit)
Animation techniques in the 2-D sphere and incorporation of visual design principles.
Prerequisites: RTVF 190-0 and second-year standing (not through AP credits).

RTVF 394-0 Experimental Media Production (1 Unit)
Creation of an experimental work as a linear film or video, an interactive website, an installation, a game, or a multidisciplinary performance.
Prerequisites: RTVF 190-0 and second-year standing (not through AP credits).

RTVF 395-0 Computer Animation: 3D (1 Unit)
The fundamental concepts and techniques of 3-D computer modeling and animation. Use of concepts acquired in camera-based production techniques to create a rendered animation.
Prerequisites: RTVF 190-0 and second-year standing (not through AP credits).

RTVF 398-0 Symposium: Issues in RTVF (1 Unit)
Special issues and topics in the analysis of radio, television, film, and popular culture.

RTVF 402-0 Television and Media Theory (1 Unit)
Seminar in the key historical and contemporary debates shaping the study of television and emerging electronic media.

RTVF 403-0 Media and Cultural Theory (1 Unit)
Seminar in cultural theory with emphasis on issues of cultural production in film, television, and digital media. Course is not repeatable with multiple topics.

RTVF 410-0 Media Historiography (1 Unit)
Introduction to historiography with emphasis on the research and writing of history in film, television, and digital media.

RTVF 411-0 Cultural History of Television (1 Unit)
This course is a critical investigation of the history of U.S. television focusing on the classic 3-network era. This course will provide a background into the events surrounding the emergence of TV as a technology, industry and cultural form.

RTVF 412-0 Cultural History of Film (1 Unit)
This course offers an introductory survey of world film history from the 1890s to the outbreak of World War II. We will examine a wide range of films, feature-length narratives as well as animated, experimental, and early shorts, and place them in their historical and cultural context.

RTVF 413-0 Cultural History of New Media (1 Unit)
This class introduces students to key debates surrounding the history of new media and digital media cultures. Taking a media studies approach, we will investigate issues of technological innovation from the 19th century to the new digital media of the present.

RTVF 420-0 Film Theory & Criticism (1 Unit)

RTVF 422-0 Textual Analysis (1 Unit)
Seminar in the textual analysis of film, television, and digital media.

RTVF 426-0 Global Media (1 Unit)
Seminar in historical and contemporary issues related to media and globalization.

RTVF 443-0 Advanced Seminar in Film & Video (1 Unit)

RTVF 464-0 Advanced Media Writing (1 Unit)
An advanced writing course primarily emphasizing dramatic writing for feature film and television. At the discretion of the instructor, the course emphasizes one of several types of writing such as episodic television, television movies, playwriting, genre films, comedies, action/adventures, and adaptation. Offered yearly.
Prerequisites: RTVF 260-0 and admission by permission of instructor.

RTVF 472-0 Advanced Editing (1 Unit)
The technique and art of editing for film. Topics include editing for continuity, controlling pace and rhythm, and editing nonlinear narratives.
Prerequisites: RTVF 380-0 and second-year standing (not through AP credits).

RTVF 475-0 Grad Prod Wkshop (1 Unit)
Intensive introduction to media production and aesthetics that includes still photography, computer simulations of production problems, and extensive small-format video production and editing.
Prerequisite: Permission of instructor.

RTVF 476-0 Advanced Cinematography (1 Unit)
Continuation of work started in RTVF 380 Lighting and Cinematography; greater emphasis on developing advanced lighting skills. Work on industry standard 16mm film cameras and High Definition video cameras. Detailed scene studies focusing on color, composition, and camera movement.
Prerequisite: RTVF 380-0, or permission of instructor.

RTVF 478-0 Film & Video Post Production (1 Unit)
An advanced study of film editing and finishing practices and procedures, videotape off-line and on-line editing, and ways in which film and videotape interface in postproduction.
Prerequisite: RTVF 380-0.

RTVF 479-0 Seminar: Studies in Film and Video Prod (1 Unit)
An advanced study and practice of one aspect of film and video making, such as scriptwriting, lighting, cinematography, directing, sound recording, or editing. May be repeated for credit no more than twice.
Prerequisite: RTVF 380-0.

RTVF 490-1 Professional Experience Practicum (0 Unit)
Provides a framework for optimizing MFA students' professional experiences during summer. Students can secure an externally hosted experience (internship, apprenticeship, fellowship, assistantship, or project-based professional experience related to student's career interests) or propose an individual career development project that will advance the student's specific goals. Followed by RTVF 490-2 in fall.
Prerequisites: 1. Completion of year 1 of their MFA. 2. Accepted for an internship in the summer quarter of their first year that has been approved by EPICS and program faculty. Students will be automatically enrolled in the Fall Internship Capstone (RTVF 490-2) for fall quarter, which is a companion class to this course.

RTVF 490-2 Professional Experience Capstone (1 Unit)
A continuation of the Professional Experience Practicum (RTVF 490-1), where students will pull insights from and integrate their summer experience to develop a personalized career strategy, action plan, and polish key assets that will help them advance their goals prior to and following graduation.

RTVF 491-0 Fall Internship Seminar (1 Unit)
This course occurs concurrently during a student's fall internship in order to provide a structured approach to their internship experience. Through weekly readings and assignments students will assess their own skills, experiences, and interests to develop a personal plan on how to best approach their internships in order to further their career goals. A special emphasis will be placed on developing professional practices that will prepare students for finding work in the entertainment industry after graduation. At the end of the course, students will complete a capstone project that will focus on different methods and strategies for applying to professionally relevant opportunities in their respective fields.

RTVF 499-0 Independent Study (1 Unit)
Permission of instructor and department required. May be repeated for credit.

RTVF 501-0 Foundations of Screen Cultures (1 Unit)
Introduction of key concepts and methods in Screen Cultures, with particular emphasis on the ways in which these ideas cut across media.

RTVF 502-0 Writing Practicum (1 Unit)

RTVF 551-0 Documentary Techniques (1 Unit)
Intro to basic camera and sound recording for traditional small-crew documentary filmmaking; interviewing; ethics; successful story structure that engages and innovates. Product: 6-8 minute documentary film.

RTVF 552-0 Narrative Techniques (1 Unit)
Intro to small-crew narrative sync-sound filmmaking; hybridization: narratives that use doc techniques, docs that use narrative techniques; additional documentary equipment. Product: 6-8 minute narrative film.

RTVF 553-0 Pre-Thesis (1 Unit)
In this seminar, first year MFA in Documentary Media students develop their thesis project, which they will complete during their second year of study. Discussion of research techniques, creative approaches and grant proposals. Students explore their artistic vision, pitch their project to peers for feedback, and situate their work within the documentary art field.

RTVF 554-0 Thesis 1 (1 Unit)

Development and major period of field production of documentary media thesis project. Product: concept, treatment, assembly/selects or completed plan for interactive prototype.

RTVF 555-0 Thesis 2 (1 Unit)
Post-production of thesis with emphasis on transitioning from fieldwork to assemblage. Product: Rough-cut or working interactive prototype.

RTVF 556-0 Thesis 3 (1 Unit)
Finish thesis project; organize final public screening and exhibitions; intro to the business of documentary media production/distribution. Product: Thesis project, artist statement, PR/marketing materials, career plan.

RTVF 561-0 Screenwriting Workshop (1 Unit)

RTVF 562-0 Television Writing Workshop (1 Unit)

RTVF 563-0 Playwriting Workshop (1 Unit)

RTVF 564-0 Full Length Project (1 Unit)

RTVF 565-0 Full-length Project II (1 Unit)

RTVF 566-0 Full-length Project III (1 Unit)

RTVF 584-0 Research Seminar (1 Unit)
Topics vary.

RTVF 590-0 Research (1-3 Units)
Independent investigation of selected problems pertaining to thesis or dissertation. May be repeated for credit.