# Writing for the Screen and Stage MFA

## Degree Requirements

The following requirements are in addition to, or further elaborate upon, those requirements outlined in The Graduate School Policy Guide (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/tgs/academic-policies-procedures).

### Master’s

**Total Units Required:** 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Core Courses</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>RTVF 561-0</td>
<td>Foundations of Writing for Screen &amp; Stage</td>
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<tr>
<td>RTVF 562-0</td>
<td>Writing the Short Play</td>
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<tr>
<td>RTVF 563-0</td>
<td>Writing the TV Episode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTVF 564-0</td>
<td>Full Length Project (Feature Thesis 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>RTVF 565-0</td>
<td>Full-length Project II (Feature Thesis 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>RTVF 566-0</td>
<td>Full-length Project III (Feature Thesis 3)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Topics Courses</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>RTVF 360-0</td>
<td>Topics in Media Writing (or other media writing electives with approval of the Director of the MFA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>or RTVF 464-0</td>
<td>Advanced Media Writing</td>
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Sample courses include:
- Writing the Production-Ready Short Film
- Writing Romantic Comedy
- The Art, Business, and Ethics of Assignment Writing
- Writing Horror/Fantasy/Supernatural
- Writing the Dramatic Pilot
- Writing the Comedy Screenplay
- Writing the \( \frac{1}{2} \) Hour Spec Script
- Writing the Sci-Fi Script
- Advanced Sitcom Writing
- Writing the Anti-Hero
- Writing the Fact-Based Drama
- LGBTQIA for Theater, TV, and/or Web
- Improv for Writers
- Pitching the TV Series
- Writing and Performing Stand-Up
- Political Drama Between Stage and Screen
- Writing the Historical Drama
- Activist Video for the Web
- Creativity and Flow in Screenwriting
- Writing the Feature Film
- Workshop the Full-Length Project
- Writing Styles
- Advanced Scene Workshop

**Production Course**

RTVF or Theatre (300-level or higher) with the approval of the Director of the MFA.

**Theory/history/culture Courses (300-level or higher)**

From Screen Cultures/RTVF, Performance Studies, Art Theory and Practice, Theatre, or other departments with approval of MFA program director.

**Electives**

From Production, Screen Cultures, or Writing/RTVF, Performance Studies, Art Theory and Practice, Theatre or other departments with approval of MFA program director. Maximum of two screenwriting, playwriting or television writing electives.

**Internship**

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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RTVF 490-1</td>
<td>Summer Internship Seminar</td>
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<tr>
<td>RTVF 490-2</td>
<td>Fall Internship Capstone</td>
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</table>

1 Parameters of media writing (character, dialogue, tone/voice, scope, context, intent, etc). Structure. Story analysis. What distinguishes one medium from another. Product: 30-page screenplay.
2 With an emphasis on understanding the structure of a feature play, film, innovative theatre piece, or interactive narrative (student’s choice) Students produce: Outline, first act.
3 With an emphasis on writing the first draft.
4 With an emphasis on adaptation, revision, and preparing the writer for the business of writing.

### Other MFA Degree Requirements

MFA students will be allowed to take a maximum of 20 credits.

Grade average: Students must maintain a B average. If a student’s average is not a B or higher by the end of the first year, he or she may be asked to leave the program.

Final portfolio Review/Defense: In consultation with the Director of the Program, each student will choose a committee of two faculty members to review his/her final portfolio (at least 3 substantial scripts created within the context of courses) and to judge his/her final defense of that portfolio.