

Course outline: Cinematography

The MA in Cinematography is a specialisation within the broader MA in Film and Television.

The role of a Cinematographer is changing rapidly: since the introduction of digital technology the traditional role of the DoP is being re-defined on an almost daily basis. At the NFTS we seek to balance both the traditional role of the craft – by teaching using 16mm and 35mm film - as well as using Digital cameras of all shapes and sizes.

Your first day at the NFTS is seen as the day you enter the Film Industry. By the time you leave the NFTS, you will have the skills and craft, through your own hard work and application, to cope with any situation that might arise. You will be confident in front of people and be able to work in high-pressure environments: our modules are designed to stretch your thinking and creativity whilst also making demands on your stamina and personality.

An important part of your time at the NFTS is that you are free to experiment, try out new ideas and “fail” amongst friends. Once you have graduated you are paid for your work and the expectation is that you will provide the required result. Here the “required result” is that you learn from your bold ideas and occasional mistakes - mistakes made in the safety of the School. We tailor a number of our modules to enable the Cinematographer to relate to the Director and other key crafts in a truly collaborative way, enabling and encouraging discussion about everything ranging from the script to colour choices involved in Production, Costume and Make-up Design.

Our Cinematography graduates are a rich and diverse mixture of people - our courses aim to encourage that difference and allow you to find your own unique way to express yourself, whilst also being both a leader and member of the team.

Year One

Foundation – You’ll be learning the grounding you’ll need over your next two years at the NFTS.

Springboard – Induction for new students

The Craft of Cinematography – You'll be learning about exposure, how to light sets, how to light on location and you'll get the opportunity to both shoot with the school's Arri Alexa cameras and the school's 16mm film cameras.

Set Protocol Week – You'll learn the 'Do's and Don'ts' around set etiquette.

Interpreting The Scene – Together with the Fiction Directors, you'll be tasked with interpreting a scene from a motion picture and filming it.

Take One Painting – You'll learn the craft of lighting for green screen as well as how to light large scale sets.

Character of Place – Your task will be to create a short 60 second animation using the technique of 'Pixilation'.

3DDDs – Short Tales – You'll create a short 60 second film on a Digital Format.

Visual Literary: Active Looking – You'll be looking at the foundation of all Cinematography - Light, movement, story and imagination.

Beyond Time – You'll be put together in a team and face the challenge of creating an original short film using only 2 rolls of 400ft of 16mm Film Stock.

Lighting Large Spaces – Together as a team you'll get the opportunity to light a large space or building and work out how with the change of day and the movement of the actors you can get the lighting to remain consistent.

Rear Projection Workshop – The craft of Rear Projection when shooting in Cars.

Silent Movie – You'll be working with outside tutors to create a short 2-minute film that you'll Direct, Produce, Write and shoot yourself.

First Year Film – Your aim is shoot a short film (around 20 minutes in length) with Writers, Directors and Production Designers. This will be shot on 16mm.

Three Light Night Workshop – The art of night filming and how you can light with three lights.

Product Lighting – How to create the perfect 'pack' shot.

Beauty Lighting – The art of how to light and observe the human face.

Perspectives In Light – We'll be getting guest DoPs to come in a light a scene where you act as crew.

Year Two

Digi Fiction – Your aim is to shoot a short film (15mins) on Alexa with the Fiction Directors.

Grad Animation – You will work with an animation director on a graduation animation film.

Take Two Painting – A series of lighting and camerawork challenges.

Summer Fiction Film – The third and final short film, with a choice to shoot any format. Made in conjunction with Writers, Directors, Producers and Production Designers.

Grad animations, TV and additional project – You'll be continuing to shoot your Grad Animation projects but in addition two other projects will be available - Graduation Television Projects and the 'Additional Project'. Some cinematographers may involve themselves with the Documentary projects.

Ready for work – you'll learn how to pitch for projects, meet agents and learn from an accounts specialist how to set yourself up as freelancer and handle tax and invoicing.

Camerimage – You'll be travelling to Poland to visit the Camerimage Film Festival.

Kodaks – The NFTS will be submitting eight commercials to the Kodak Student Commercial Competition. You'll each get to shoot one and you'll also get the chance to pitch your idea and get the chance to direct your own Kodak.

Directing Commercials – Throughout the second year you'll get the opportunity to work hand in hand with the Directing Commercials students and shoot Commercials to industry briefs.