NFTS | **NATIONAL FILM AND TELEVISION SCHOOL**

Course outline: Editing

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

Year One

Springboard - Cross Specialisation Introductory Workshop (duration 1 week)
- an introduction to the moving image, looking at cinematic and televisual language through the prism of storytelling
- it investigates how the main crafts of cinema and television, screenwriting, cinematography, visualisation, editing, sound and music each relate to the way filmmaking puts across narrative ideas.

Specialist Workshops

In Year One the emphasis is on developing practical and analytical skills through exercises, workshops and small productions. Editors will complete short workshops using rushes from current high-end television dramas and rig documentaries.

1. Film Technology

To form a technical and theoretical basis for all aspects of editing, students are introduced to film and magnetic sound. They will learn how to edit film sequences on a Steenbeck and create simple soundtracks.

2. Avid Training

Editing students will be given an overview of non-linear editing: preparation and planning, breaking-down, basic editing operations, logging, syncing, and audio editing will be covered, together with recording, generating EDL's, using effects, problem solving and project management.

3. Sound and Music

The integration of sound with picture editing will be emphasised in special exercises and all productions. Editors will become familiar with the School's sound facilities including the dubbing theatres. They will learn how to sync rushes and create basic sound tracks with film sound on the Avid. They will be expected to work with Directors, Sound Editors and Composers to incorporate sound and music into their cuts to enhance the narrative.

Other exercises will introduce the editors to sound mixing, and sound effects editing and music editing. Students will be given the opportunity to attend the School of Sound symposium.

4. Digital Post-Production

Editors will be introduced to a range of digital visual effects and onlining systems including:

- AVID Symphony
- Assimilate Scratch
- Autodesk flame
- Autodesk smoke
- Filmlight Baselight
- AVID DS Nitris
- Image Systems Nucoda

5. Screen Arts

To complement the practical aspects of the curriculum, the course offers ongoing teaching of the creative and theoretical side of editing and post-production. Each Monday is dedicated to Screen Arts, with lectures at the School by filmmakers and theorists, and screenings of historically and artistically relevant films.

Screen Arts is also incorporated into workshops through seminars and lectures exploring particular ideas relevant to the exercise. Topics include documentary techniques, how to read a script and understand scene structure, the relationship between sound and image and the use of genre in narrative filmmaking. Students are also given the opportunity to attend the BFI London Film Festival.

6. Cross Specialist Modules

These modules create a space to experiment with ideas, craft and screen language. The common link for us as filmmakers is that our creativity lies in our "response" to memory, text, character, space, sound, etc. and to other human beings. We must develop skills that allow us to communicate that response. Often, preconceptions, assumptions and over-rigid preparation can prevent us from seeing what is around us and therefore limit what we are capable of communicating.

Throughout these modules we encourage you to open up to your environment and the material you are working with. You will discover strategies that match your responses and develop ways in which you can play with ideas, screen language and, last but not least, your audience. We will develop ways of looking at character and examine the differences between the "invented" and the "real".

Specific modules stress the collaboration between the various filmmaking disciplines often allowing students to change roles and responsibilities. More involved workshops and productions involve all the departments working together in a professional environment.

Cross specialist modules include:

- **Sound & Music in Documentary** – This a collaborative exercise involving editors, documentary directors, sound designers, and composers working with abstract images.
- **Animation Projects 1, 2 & 3** - exercises working with sound and music in a variety of animation styles. Working with Animation students on short films, Editors learn to work to required and agreed length, and to understand how to proceed with the post-production requirements on an animation film. They

learn storyboarding and the preparation of animatics, lip-syncing and music synch.

- **Without Images** – Sound Designers, Composers and Editors creating narrative or abstract sound pieces. This workshop is collaboration between Editing, Sound and Composition. Working with narrative, abstract or documentary material, the teams produce a 5-minute sound piece experimenting with radio and film sound techniques: location and studio recording, Foleys, dialogue editing, synthesizing sound effects and mixing. This workshop emphasises the role of sound, music and voice in storytelling and the communication of ideas.

- **Moment of Truth** - basic documentary editing with documentary directors. The editors will form working relationships with the Documentary Directors and collaborate on material shot by the Documentary students. Together they will learn to capture a defining moment in a subject's life in a short film - an exercise requiring acute judgement of character, an ability to get the subject to respond and reveal themselves together with an imaginative understanding of visual metaphor. Students will learn how to focus on the key moment of a subject's story and how to distil that moment. The power and methodology of relating the "moment" to appropriate visual metaphors, together with working within strict time constraints will be examined.

- **Beyond Time** - This is a short collaborative film, working with Fiction Directors, Cinematographers, Sound Designers & Composers, in which students are asked to operate within strict parameters. Students are encouraged to experiment with cinematic time to create a coherent story where staging, image and sound are used to their fullest potential.

- **Graduation Science & Natural History project** - This is the only grad project that takes place in Year One. Editors will work with 2nd year Science & Natural History students.

- **First Year Film** - Throughout the first year ideas and scripts will be developed for a 5-10 minute film which is shot and edited during the autumn term. Sometimes these films are based around a shared theme or genre. Scripts will be developed by the producers and directors in conjunction with cinematographers, production design and sound. The composers provide the music and the films are edited and mixed by the end of the year.

- **Question Documentary** - workshop with Documentary directors, creating a documentary piece from in-depth research and filming.

Year Two

In Year Two, the emphasis is on longer productions and advanced workshops.

1. Graduation Productions
Most of Year Two is dedicated to extended productions that are shot on film, or digital format, off-lined on Avid and fully post-produced through on-line or master print with a final sound mix. These are cross- specialist productions where editors collaborate with fiction/documentary/animation directors, cinematographers, sound designers, composers, set designers and scriptwriters. Editors will work on several productions in the three Direction departments as well as on the Digital Film Project with Fiction Directors.

By bringing together and testing their acquired skills on a larger production, the editors will have the chance to pursue the language and voice which has been developing through smaller workshops and exercises. Imagining Reality (graduation Documentary project) is from 20-40 minutes, Animation graduation films last 5-10 minutes and the Fiction Summer Film is approximately 17 minutes.

2. Commercials
Over the course of your two years you'll be asked to edit 3-4 commercials a year as part of the Directing Commercials course run by the NFTS.

This gives you as an editor the opportunity to work with the Directing Commercials students as well as build your showreel and hone the skill of telling a story within 30 seconds. The commercials will be shot in blocks of 12 (roughly around Easter, August and November/December). Editing will take place at the NFTS and will occur over the weekend. To make things easier for you you'll be able to book your slot and choose when you edit (either at Easter, August or the November/December window). This is a compulsory part of the curriculum and although you won't be marked on the outcome of the commercials, the commercials will be shown in London to agents and at the Graduation Show allowing your work as an editor to get more screen time.

3. Advanced Editing
Workshops covering advanced techniques in editing and editing room protocols will be designed according to the students' individual talents. In past years, these have included a Music Editing Workshop and editing the feature film, Richard III, and tuition in assistant editing skills required in features' cutting rooms.

4. Industry Familiarisation
Industry professionals hold open discussions, instructing the students in business skills, free-lancing and beginning a career after graduation. Preparing students for graduation, this module will explain the freelance sector, looking for work, CV writing, accounting and making contacts in the industry. Talks from professionals and visits will form part of the module.