



FILM & DIGITAL MEDIA

CURRICULUM AND GUIDELINES 2024/2025

This handbook serves as an overview of courses, standards, and guidelines set by Idyllwild Arts Academy's Film & Digital Media Department. Course offerings subject to enrollment and availability.

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STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

The Film & Digital Media program is an immersive experience in the practice and understanding of the art of filmmaking, digital media, and audiovisual content production. This pre-professional program emphasizes craft through the rigorous, experiential study of the creative and technical foundations of the film and digital media industry. Furthermore, we foster innovation through the exploration of emerging media technologies. With the creative spirit in mind, students of the program are engaged as critical thinkers of the world around them. Students effectively identify, develop, and learn to communicate their creative voice through impactful, engaging film and digital media productions. As students navigate their identity as global Citizen Artists, they are encouraged to pursue excellence and innovation in their craft.

DEPARTMENT REQUIREMENTS

Completing the Core Areas of Study and fulfilling the appropriate Production Requirements will allow a student to earn the Film & Digital Media Arts Certificate and enable them to earn any additional certificates (including those for concentrations) offered within our department. Each student will find themselves creating their own Certificate path, one that reflects their interests and goals.

Required Core Areas of Study and Production Requirements vary according to the number of years a student is enrolled in the Film & Digital Media Department (for more information, please contact the department Chair). Post-graduate students will work with the department Chair to enroll in relevant courses.

Emulating the apprenticeship nature of the film and digital media industry, each Core Area of Study requires the mastery of specific skill sets. New and returning students will be placed in the appropriate learning levels for the various Core Areas of Study. Placement is decided at the discretion of Film & Digital Media faculty and Chair review, based on objective assessment.

Different concentrations will be made available on an individual basis, especially for students who come to Idyllwild Arts for one semester or one year.

The program offers opportunities to use industry-standard and emerging media equipment and software. Students have the advantage of graduating with AVID Media Composer User and AVID Pro-Tools User

certifications, among other certifications to be determined by our new faculty. Also, IAA's proximity to Los Angeles affords students a rich opportunity to learn and build relationships with industry experts through masterclasses that support the overall curriculum.

CORE AREAS OF STUDY

- Screenwriting
- Producing for Film
- Directing for Film & Digital Media
- Cinematography
- Sound Design
- Editing and Post-Production
- Media Makers
- Film Appreciation / Theory /History
- Film History Advanced (offered by the Humanities department)
- Film Studio Workshop
- Practicum
- Junior Seminar
- Senior Seminar

***Please note that levels for the Core Areas of Study will be offered according to student needs every semester.*

PRODUCTION REQUIREMENTS

FOUR-YEAR STUDENTS

- Complete the Core Areas of Study for three years
- Complete a college application film
- Participate in eight IDYFILM Productions in any of the following areas (possibility to graduate with an Arts Certificate and a specific concentration):
 - Directing
 - Production Design / Art
 - Cinematography
 - Sound Design / Foley
 - Grip and Electric
 - Editing
 - Makeup and Hair
 - Costume Design
 - Screenwriting
 - Producing
 - Storyboarding (i.e. as a Storyboard Artist)
- Apply to at least five film festivals
- Participate in three Idy Film PSA / Marketing campaigns
- Website with EPK and work reels

THREE-YEAR STUDENTS

- Complete the Core Areas of Study for two years
- Complete a college application film
- Participate in six IDYFILM Productions in any of the following areas (possibility to graduate with an Arts Certificate and a specific concentration)
 - Directing
 - Production Design / Art
 - Cinematography
 - Sound Design / Foley
 - Grip and Electric
 - Editing
 - Makeup and Hair
 - Costume Design
 - Screenwriting
 - Producing
 - Storyboarding (i.e. as a Storyboard Artist)
- Apply to at least five film festivals
- Participate in two Idy Film PSA / Marketing campaigns
- Website with EPK and work reels

TWO-YEAR STUDENTS

- Complete the Core Areas of Study for one year
- Complete a college application film
- Participate in four IDYFILM Productions in any of the following areas (possibility to graduate with an Arts Certificate and a specific concentration):
 - Directing
 - Production Design / Art
 - Cinematography
 - Sound Design / Foley
 - Grip and Electric
 - Editing
 - Makeup and Hair
 - Costume Design
 - Screenwriting
 - Producing
 - Storyboarding (i.e. as a Storyboard Artist)
- Apply to at least five film festivals
- Participate in two Idy Film PSA / Marketing campaigns
- Website with EPK and work reels

ONE-YEAR STUDENTS

- Complete selected Core Areas of Study
- Complete a college application film

- Participate in one IDYFILM PRODUCTION in any of the following areas:
 - Directing
 - Production Design / Art
 - Cinematography
 - Sound Design / Foley
 - Grip and Electric
 - Editing
 - Makeup and Hair
 - Costume Design
 - Screenwriting
 - Producing
 - Storyboarding (i.e. as a Storyboard Artist)
- Apply to at least one film festival
- Participate in one Idy Film PSA / Marketing campaign
- Website with EPK and work reel

PRODUCTION REQUIREMENTS BREAKDOWN*

FOUR-YEAR STUDENTS

- 3 years of Core Areas of Study classes
- 8+ IDYFILM Productions
- Apply to 5+ Film Festivals
- 3+ Film PSA/Marketing campaigns
- Complete a college application film
- Create a website with EPK and work reels

THREE-YEAR STUDENTS

- 2 years of Core Areas of Study classes
- 6+ IDYFILM Productions
- Apply to 5+ Film Festivals
- 2+ Film PSA/Marketing campaigns
- Complete a college application film
- Create a website with EPK and work reels

TWO-YEAR STUDENTS

- 1 years of Core Areas of Study classes
- 4+ IDYFILM Productions
- Apply to 5+ Film Festivals
- 2+ Film PSA/Marketing campaigns
- Complete a college application film
- Create a website with EPK and work reels

ONE-YEAR STUDENTS

- Selected Core Areas of Study classes
- 1+ IDYFILM Production
- Apply to 1+ Film Festivals
- 1+ Film PSA/Marketing campaigns
- Complete a college application film
- Create a website with EPK and work reels

*The Production Requirements are broken down according to the number of years the student has been enrolled, regardless of grade level

CONCENTRATION CERTIFICATES

12th-grade students can declare a specific concentration and earn a certification in their concentration (in addition to the Film Arts Certificate). Concentrations available include:

- Sound Design for Digital Media
- Directing
- Producing for Digital Media
- Cinematography
- Production Design for Digital Media
- Editing and Post-Production
- Writing for Media
- Art Direction
- Music Composition / Scoring for Film (in tandem with the Music Department)

More concentrations and certifications are in development, including (but not limited to):

- Acting for the Camera (in tandem with the Dramatic Arts Department)
- VFX / Virtual Filmmaking / Virtual Reality (contingent on hiring a VFX faculty member in the future)

For more information on declaring concentrations and obtaining additional certifications, please refer to IA's Film & Digital Media Department and/or contact the department Chair.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

The following section describes the Core Areas of Study and associated course content. Course availability may vary from year to year.

INTRODUCTION TO FILMMAKING

Students will be introduced to Digital Filmmaking, Film Production, and Film Industry standard practices. An introductory course for anyone interested in cinema, film and digital media. This is a class to experience and discuss all essential aspects of filmmaking. What kinds of films and genres are there? What are all the crew positions and what do they do on a set? Students will experiment hands-on how to act in each crew position in class exercises, to begin finding their voice in the vast world of film.

WRITING FOR MEDIA

Writing for Media is designed to teach the art of storytelling in the context of media technology and literacy. The Writing for Media curriculum will have two main areas of study: Dramatic Writing and Creative Non-fiction.

DRAMATIC WRITING

Dramatic Writing will explore the art of crafting compelling narratives for short dramatic films, animation, television, and interactive digital media. Throughout the course, students will learn the four building blocks of story: character development, plot structure, thematic exploration, and genre. Beginning students will write a one-page screenplay, a three to five page screenplay, and a seven to ten page screenplay. Advanced

dramatic writing students will explore eighteen to twenty page screenplays, television pilots, and stage plays.

CREATIVE NONFICTION

Creative Nonfiction will introduce students to diverse and impactful ways in which non-fiction media can enlighten, educate, and entertain audiences while shedding light on real-world stories and experiences. Students will study the art of interviewing, conducting research, and fact-checking to ensure accuracy and credibility in their projects. In addition to honing their creative skills, students will also gain a deeper understanding of ethical considerations in media production, learning to respect privacy and present diverse perspectives responsibly. Beginning Students will write a short podcast; a short exposé on a fellow student or a member of the Idyllwild community; and a self-portrait. Advanced students will explore writing short documentaries related to historical events, current events, nature, science, and people of interest.

PRODUCING FOR FILM AND DIGITAL MEDIA

This course examines the creative, organizational, and managerial roles of the producer in narrative and non-narrative genres, applying industry standards to short-form student audiovisual productions. Special emphasis is given to the collaborative process of filmmaking. Students are expected to break down, schedule, budget, and secure resources for a film or audiovisual project. Students will materialize their work through a physical production bible. Students will gain a working knowledge of professional producing software. They will execute producing tasks, including production breakdowns, crew selection, location scouts, casting sessions, and actor contracts. There will be an ongoing discussion about the managerial and problem-solving skills indispensable to work as a producer. Students will learn the meaning and specific aspects of every job and crew position available in the film industry. They will also proactively study and practice industry trends and upcoming developments.

DIRECTING FOR FILM AND DIGITAL MEDIA

Students learn the history of the role of the director in the film industry. Students explore and practice directing concepts and tools including: analyzing and breaking down their ideas and scripts; emotional structure; visual units; working with actors; introduction to character and the storyteller's perspective; blocking and staging strategies; communicating with department heads; and key cinematography knowledge for directors. Students will have an opportunity to understand, create, and utilize cinematic time to better engage the audience with the story. Students will focus on the arduous, strategic, and professional creative development of short films and alternative media projects, following industry standards. During this course:

- Students will develop and present ("pitch") their projects. Through the quality of their materials, students will showcase their deep understanding of all concepts mastered in the foundational level.
- Students will be introduced to key methodology in order to channel and tangibly express their creative vision as directors from development to pre-production phases.
- Students will explore critical stylistic and spatial concepts, as well as initial production and administrative aspects of filmmaking from a director's perspective.
- Students will extensively practice scene work to decipher and internalize the relationship between actors in front of the camera.
- Students will learn and practice how to better communicate among creative departments, including how to break down the script appropriately from a production and creative point of view.

CINEMATOGRAPHY

This class focuses on principles of cinematography, including camera work, lighting, grip techniques, and rigging equipment. Other principles include camera operation, safety, electrical distribution, interior and exterior lighting, camera movement, composition, depth of field, focus pulling. Set hierarchy, set etiquette, communication, kindness, and positive mental attitude will be taught and modeled.

Students will explore all of the ideas, equipment, and protocols that go into making an image for Film. From lighting to lensing, knot tying to shot listing. Each week we will tackle a new piece of the puzzle that makes up the world of cinematography, and learn to collaborate with each other on amazing images for the viewers to enjoy.

PRODUCTION DESIGN

This class will provide a comprehensive introduction to key aspects of Production Design, including:

1. Tool Safety

Ensuring safe practices while using various tools and equipment in set building and design.

2. Set Building

Learning the fundamentals of constructing sets, including materials, techniques, and practical applications.

3. Department Communication

Developing effective communication skills, from the art department's perspective, to facilitate collaboration between different departments.

4. Basic Color Theory

Understanding the principles of color theory and its application in creating visually appealing and thematically consistent sets.

5. Pre-Visualization

Exploring methods of pre-visualization to plan and conceptualize set designs before actual construction. Through hands-on projects and collaborative exercises, students will gain practical experience and a solid foundation in the essential elements of Production Design.

SET DRESSING / PROP STYLING AND BUILDING

This class will delve into the art of set dressing and prop styling, emphasizing the role of character and story in design decisions. Key areas of focus include:

1. Character and Story-Driven Design

Exploring how set dressing and props can reflect and enhance character traits and narrative elements.

2. Time Period and Socio-Economic Factors

Understanding how historical context and socio-economic conditions influence design choices.

3. Prop Design and Construction

Learning to design and build props using materials such as foam, wood, and wire.

Students will engage in hands-on projects that challenge them to create authentic, story-rich environments, enhancing their skills in both creative design and practical craftsmanship.

SOUND DESIGN

This course introduces digital filmmakers and sound designers to the unique contributions that sound brings to image. Students will work to create field recordings for live action location and studio films. The students will use professional field recording equipment and sound editing software to develop a basic understanding of the workflow and practices associated with recording and soundscape development.

This course introduces digital filmmakers to the post-production environment as sound designers. Students will explore the unique contributions that sound brings to an image. Students will work with post-production mixing and sound re-recording equipment as well as sound editing software to develop a basic understanding of the workflow and practices associated with the completion of a professional soundtrack. This course seeks to promote effective collaboration between audio teams and film/video teams in a professional environment. Students will apply their knowledge and skills in the development of a basic soundtrack.

EDITING AND POST-PRODUCTION

The Introduction to Editing and Post-Production course examines editing as an art form and an integral part of the filmmaking process. The course covers both the theory and basic techniques of editing. Students will use these concepts to analyze cinematic scenes and in the post-production of their own film projects. The accumulation of these editing experiences offers an overview of the complete post-production process, including how to make informed editing choices and develop one's own aesthetic style. The course offers an introduction to the role of the editor, in respect of all aspects of post-production. Students will learn core skills and technical requirements to edit many different types of genre content, and have the opportunity to investigate key aspects of the psychology of editing, an invaluable aspect of creative thinking and one that will inevitably make for better filmmakers. Some of the many topics that will be covered include project set up, organizing media, understanding the tool bar, editing a sequence with the rule of thirds and eye trace in mind, refining sound and understanding codec, as well as creating and outputting files for viewing. Students are required to edit various assigned sequences to achieve these goals.

ADVANCED EDITING & POST-PRODUCTION

The Advanced Editing & Post-Production course approaches film production from the perspective of the cutting room. It provides further study of the core skills necessary to edit narrative, experimental, and documentary film and digital media projects. Students will learn to utilize Adobe Premiere Pro on a professional level. Advanced post-production techniques, including visual effects and color correction, will be explored.

FILM APPRECIATION: THEORY AND HISTORY

In this class we will discuss different filmmakers and filmmaking techniques, and break down how they affect the viewer. Students will explore different eras and genres of film and gain an understanding of film's history and the way in which filmmakers have developed their own voices and filmmaking styles over the last century of this art form.

FILM HISTORY ADVANCED (HUMANITIES)

This class is offered as an academic humanities class. It is a requirement to obtain the Film & Digital Media Arts certificate.

FILM STUDIO WORKSHOP

This class provides studio space for the lengthy process of bringing Digital Media Projects into physical production and tangible fruition for showcasing and distribution to the public. Students film their projects, participating in various capacities as crew members and performing the technical, logistical, and creative skills they have learned throughout all our classes.

In the Film Studio Workshop, students practice technical aspects learned in all classes, such as camera and gear operation, scheduling, building sets, hosting production and logistics meetings, and conceptualizing their vision for each project. It is an open studio space where they can sharpen their technical and creative abilities.

MEDIA MAKERS

Students will learn and practice media literacy through the exploration of emerging forms of media making such as enhanced reality. Students will have a choice to develop projects in traditional media forms such as radio, newspaper, magazine, documentary, animation, newsreels, as well as any form of alternative digital media.

Students will practice the basics of journalism, media making and science of communication practices.

NEW TECHNOLOGY (VFX, VIRTUAL FILMMAKING, VR, XR TECHNOLOGY) (MASTER CLASSES)

This class will open space for artists in residency and invite collaboration with film companies currently working in the fields pertaining to the latest media technologies available in the market.

JUNIOR SEMINAR

The Junior Seminar focuses on beginning the assembly of an artistic college portfolio and completing deliverables necessary to obtain the Arts Certificate and any other chosen certifications and/or concentrations (if applicable).

SENIOR SEMINAR

The Senior Seminar class focuses on finalizing an artistic college portfolio and completing deliverables necessary to obtain the Arts Certificate and any other chosen certifications and/or concentrations (if applicable). This includes making a personal website and work reels.

DEPARTMENT GUIDELINES

CLASS LEVEL PLACEMENT

Students are assigned to specific classes for each Core Area of Study, and they are required to completely develop individualized skill sets before advancing to further class levels. Enrollment and placement are based on portfolio review and initial hands-on assessments, and at the discretion of the Film & Digital Media Chair and faculty.

COLLABORATION

Filmmaking is a collaborative art form that requires strong leadership skills and the ability to work well with others. Reciprocal honesty, respect, generosity, flexibility, and a positive attitude are essential qualities expected and practiced in the program. Under this balance and synergy, student filmmakers are able to succeed in their artistic pursuits.

PITCH PROCESS

Beginner students will produce self-portrait and documentary projects, presenting their idea for approval to the Creative Development faculty.

Advanced students will have the opportunity to prepare a pitch to be presented to peers, faculty members, and industry professionals. Six projects will be selected and greenlit for pre-production by a panel of faculty and industry professionals. Criteria taken into consideration for a project to be greenlit includes (but it is not limited to) the caliber of the pitch, the feasibility of the project, and the quality of the intellectual material. Projects can be (or include): short narratives, documentaries, newsreels, radio shows, new media, music videos, TV pilots, social media campaigns, PSAs, and performance media collaborations with other departments.

Through this pitching process and panel review, six major IDYFILM productions will be selected and then produced throughout the school year. Those projects can be canceled if the team of students involved is not complying with their set pre-production milestones. When and if that occurs, the Chair of the department will greenlight the next project in queue if the time left in the school year allows for such a project to be developed and produced successfully.

We will produce and film college application films at the beginning of the fall semester as needed by 12th-grade students. These films require approval from the Chair of the department and assigned faculty, but do not go through the IDYFILM productions' rigorous pitch process.

PRODUCTION

Students are assigned crew positions on productions throughout the year and must participate when assigned. There is a participation limit of four main projects per year to guarantee the students' safety and well-being. Production schedules include Friday nights and Saturdays.

Filmmaking is a physical occupation, and students should be able to lift 30–40 lbs during production. The Department Chair will assess and set accommodations for any student health or physical restrictions.

Please note that portions of this document are subject to changes and/or additions deemed necessary; the Film & Digital Media Department reserves the right to adjust its curriculum and expectations as deemed appropriate. It is expected that every student will do their best to use good judgment and will conduct themselves with a positive attitude, be polite, and develop a strong sense of professionalism through their time at Idyllwild Arts Academy.