

RUTGERS CENTER  
FOR  
DIGITAL FILMMAKING

UNDERGRADUATE BFA HANDBOOK  
2015-2016

# Rutgers Center for Digital Filmmaking

## B.F.A. Digital Filmmaking Handbook 2015-2016

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## Introduction

We are very excited to welcome you all as the very first cohort at the Rutgers Center for Digital Filmmaking! Together over the next four years, we will embark on a journey of life long learning and collaborative friendships in a close-knit community. The department strives to offer an undergraduate program that balances practice, theory and history of cinema. Through a solid grounding in film production and theory, you will have a chance to develop your unique voice, artistic sensibilities, and complex responses to art and the world around you. You will also have the chance to expand your experience through partaking in the expansive liberal arts courses offered at Rutgers University.

Rutgers Centre for Digital Filmmaking is privileged to share the same Civic Square building with Rutgers University's world-renowned Mason Gross Visual Arts Department. Under one roof, you will be surrounded by award winning artists, educators and contemporary visiting artists, while having exposure to the latest developments in cinema and technology in an exciting artistic environment.

It is not just our connection to other artistic fields at a world-class university that makes our program so special, but also our proximity to New York City and Philadelphia. Both of these cities are steeped in a rich artistic history, with internationally acclaimed theatres, museums, and galleries at your fingertips. The vision and energy that emanate from these stimulating art scenes are here for you to absorb, critique and redefine, while making art and raising art awareness on the road to becoming exceptional artists.

As the dawn of your four-year journey into filmmaking begins, we want you to remember we are here not just to give you a solid grounding in theory and practice, but to enrich and cultivate your creative mind. All the staff and faculty at Rutgers Centre for Digital Filmmaking are here to support you during the time we are fortunate to share with you. We look forward to meeting you and together fostering your professional exploration.

*Best of luck for the year,*

*Nicolás Pereda*  
*Director of Rutgers Center for Digital Filmmaking*

## General Information

### Registration

First-year students are guided in their registration for classes in their initial semester at Mason Gross. Once enrolled, students must register themselves for each new semester via the web registration system ([webreg.rutgers.edu](http://webreg.rutgers.edu)). This site includes links to the Course Schedule Planner and Degree Navigator. Degree Navigator tracks the courses you have already taken, credits applied, and the courses/credits you still need to complete for graduation.

A list of courses offered in the upcoming semester is available on the Registrar's Office webpage ([registrar.rutgers.edu](http://registrar.rutgers.edu)). If you are unsure about which courses you need, contact Karina F. Daves at [karina.daves@rutgers.edu](mailto:karina.daves@rutgers.edu). If changes are made to courses for which you are registered for, you will receive a notification via email. Therefore, it is important that you check your Rutgers email account, as well as any personal accounts, and read all emails from the university or program office.

### Degree Requirements Audits

We encourage you to monitor your own status with regard to your degree requirements. In order to avoid difficulty in the final year, in addition to using Degree Navigator, please schedule regular audits with Karina F. Daves. The summer before the final year of study, the Dean of Students will review each student's transcript and complete a list of all remaining requirements for graduation.

### Adding and Dropping Classes

Please check the Registrar's Office webpage ([registrar. Rutgers.edu](http://registrar.Rutgers.edu)) for exact dates each year. Students who have completed fewer than 60 credits may not add or drop any course on the first day of class in the Fall.

### Academic Warning Notices

During the middle of each semester, instructors normally report to the university registrar names of any students who are making unsatisfactory progress in a course. Warning notices are then emailed to a student's Rutgers email account. Instructors may also personally warn a student, or post a warning list. Consult with your instructor immediately if you receive a warning. Students are strongly recommended to schedule a meeting with Assistant Director, Patrick Stettner, [pstettner@masongross.rutgers.edu](mailto:pstettner@masongross.rutgers.edu), if you are warned in more than one subject.

## Appealing a Grade

Students wishing to file a complaint about a course grade, or a grade received for a particular piece of work in a course, should first attempt to resolve the matter through discussion with the instructor. If the issue cannot be satisfactorily resolved between student and instructor, the student may specify in writing the basis for the complaint and request a review by the departmental chair.

Complaints about grades for work completed while a course is in progress must be submitted in writing to the departmental chair no later than two weeks after notification of the grade. Complaints about final course grades must be submitted in writing to the departmental chair no later than four weeks after the end of the exam period for that semester.

A student who wishes to appeal the decision of the department should do so in writing to the Mason Gross Dean of Students. Written notification of the action taken by either the Director or the Dean will be sent to the students within four weeks of receipt of the appeal, excluding weeks in which classes are not in regular session.

## Transfer Students

At this time the Rutgers Center for Digital Filmmaking program does not allow transfer students into the program.

## RCDF Undergraduate Degree

RCDF offers undergraduate studies leading to the Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) degree. The Bachelor of Fine Arts is offered only to students enrolled in the Mason Gross School of the Arts.

## BFA Program

The Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) program in Digital Filmmaking offers comprehensive technical and artistic training in a supportive environment. Students collaborate, take risks, and build upon a solid foundation in fiction and documentary filmmaking to create original digital narratives. Students receive hands-on training in direction, cinematography, screenwriting, producing, editing, and post-production technique, while delving into filmmaking history, theory, and criticism.

**The BFA requires a total of 121 credits for graduation, from a combination of Liberal Arts (university mandated/33 credits) and Digital Filmmaking (88 credits) courses. Work towards the BFA degree starts with foundation courses and the intermediate and advanced courses provide specific training in the area of concentration. Studies culminate in the final year with a BFA Thesis project.**

### **BFA Digital Filmmaking Requirements (88 credits)**

As part of the work toward the BFA degree students must complete the following: 20 Film Production Courses (60 credits), 4 Cinema Studies Courses (12 credits), 1 Video Editing Lab (1 credit), 3 Visual Arts courses (9 credits), 1 Gender, Race & Class in the Media course (3 credits), and 1 Intro to Art History 106 course (3 credits).

### **BFA Liberal Arts Requirements (33 credits)**

In addition to the 88 credits of Digital Filmmaking requirements, students must complete 33 total credits in Liberal Arts, including the following Natural Sciences (6), Arts & Humanities (12), Social Sciences & History (6), Writing & Communication (3), Literature (3), and Quantitative/Technical Skills (3).

### **BFA Electives (15 credits)**

BFA Digital Filmmaking students will also have the opportunity to choose five 3 credit elective courses from across the university to fulfill their 121 credits for graduation.

### **Rutgers University Requirements in English**

Every student at Rutgers must demonstrate basic competency in English and Mathematics. All students entering from high school must take placement tests in both subjects to determine their placement.

At Rutgers, every student must pass English 101: Expository Writing, which is generally taken in the first semester. If a student is placed at a lower level in English composition, all courses preliminary to English 101 should be taken in sequence immediately upon entering the program. This also applies to remedial English courses, which must be completed satisfactorily before other academic coursework may begin. Failure to take and pass the required courses in English will be regarded as failure to make progress in the BFA program and may result in dismissal.

### **Byrne First-Year Seminar Program**

The program connects first-year students to the research life of the University from the beginning of their studies at Rutgers. The seminars have no letter grades and no formal exams. These seminars are small, one-credit courses, limited to 20 students. Seminars typically meet for 10 weeks, starting in the second week of fall and spring

semester. Students may take one seminar each semester. The Byrne Seminars are open only to Freshmen. For details, see <http://byrneseminars.rutgers.edu/>

## Digital Filmmaking BFA Review System

### Artistic Review

At regular intervals the division reviews the work of each student to determine if artistic achievement and commitment to the professional program and curriculum warrants retention in the program. Students in the Rutgers Center for Digital Filmmaking receive a program review in the spring of their sophomore and junior years. The sophomore review enables the faculty to review and recommend each qualified student for intermediate-level work in a BFA concentration. The junior review, conducted by the faculty, initiates the third-year student's plan for senior BFA thesis coursework.

### Sophomore Review

In the end of the spring semester of the sophomore year BFA students in Digital Filmmaking have a mandatory faculty review. Passing the sophomore review is a requirement of the BFA program and a prerequisite for the junior review. Students upload a selection of their best work from the full range of freshman and sophomore courses they have taken at Mason Gross plus any other independently produced films they have completed during their time at Rutgers. At this review, students declare their intended concentration, Fiction or Documentary, and submit a statement outlining their reasons for this choice. Faculty members assess whether the student is making work at an appropriate level. Students who lack sufficient work, show poor engagement with their studies, or demonstrate poor quality work will not pass the review at that time and will be re-reviewed the following fall semester. For those students that do not pass the review, their written assessment will be made available in the Digital Filmmaking Program office.

### Junior Review

In the end of the spring semester of the junior year, BFA Digital Filmmaking Program students who have passed the sophomore reviews have a mandatory artistic review with faculty in their declared concentration. Students upload a selection of their best work from their junior year and prepare a short statement that defines their plans for their Thesis.



Passing the junior review is a requirement of the BFA program and a prerequisite for graduation. This is an opportunity for the faculty to assess the progress within the area of concentration and to get a sense of the ideas and skills students need to focus on during their senior year. Faculty will assess whether students are making work at an appropriate level. Once students have passed the Junior Review, they can register for their Senior year and Thesis. Those students who lack sufficient work, show poor engagement with their studies, or have poor quality work will not pass the junior Review at this time and will be re-reviewed in the Fall semester. For those students that do not pass the review, their written assessment will be made available in the Digital Filmmaking Program office. Students who need to be re-reviewed can register for their Thesis, but they will not receive credit until they have passed the re-review.

## Artistic Probation and Dismissal

### General Principles

A student's progress in the Bachelor of Fine Arts program will be measured by the level of achievement in film classes. Artistic achievement will be indicated by both the instructor's grade and the reports by faculty members at the mandatory reviews. The following criteria will not necessarily result in probation or dismissal, but should be regarded as the adequate justification for such action.

### Artistic Probation

A student may be placed on probation for any of the following reasons:

- A grade of C or worse in their concentration in any semester.
- Not passing Sophomore Review.
- Not passing Junior Review.
- Not following the Digital Filmmaking curriculum.

Students placed on artistic probation are notified in writing by the Dean's office and must satisfy divisional requirements to remain in the program. Students whose dismissal has been recommended by the Faculty Committee for artistic reasons (deficiency in artistic production and/or quality of the work) may request transfer to other programs of the Mason Gross School of the Arts or any other college at Rutgers whose admission requirements they meet. No guarantee of admission to another division or program can be given to students who have received an artistic dismissal, but the Dean's office will assist students in completing the necessary transfer forms. Artistic dismissal is subject to appeal to the Dean of the school.

## Artistic Dismissal

A student may be dismissed from the Digital Filmmaking Program for any of the following reasons:

A grade of D or F in the concentration in any semester, or grades of C or worse in any two semesters.

Failure to pass a Sophomore Re-review

Failure to pass a Junior Re-review

Except in extreme circumstances a student will not be dismissed without having first been placed on probation for one semester. After a probationary semester, performance that would justify further probation will normally result in dismissal. Artistic Probation and Dismissal can be appealed to the Dean of Students of Mason Gross.

## Academic Probation and Dismissal

Policies concerning academic performance are established for all students in Mason Gross and can be found in the Mason Gross section of the Rutgers Undergraduate Catalog. Each student's academic progress is monitored each semester by the Dean's office. When issues arise, they are resolved by the Mason Gross Scholastic Standing Committee, which is chaired by the Dean of Students. The specific guidelines for deciding when a student should be placed on probation or dismissed are as follows:

### Academic Probation

Any student, including first-term, first-year students, whose term average is lower than 1.8, is placed on academic probation. Students are notified in writing of probationary status before the start of the next term. While on probation, students must maintain full-time academic status and must complete successfully at least 12 credits per term.

### Academic Dismissal

There are no automatic dismissals for first-term, first-year students. Students ordinarily are dismissed when their term average is 1.4 or less regardless of their cumulative grade-point average or preceding term average. Students may also be dismissed if their term average falls below probationary level in any three terms or in any two consecutive terms or if their cumulative grade-point average at any time is less than the following: first year, 1.6; sophomore year, 1.8, junior year; 2.0; senior year, 2.0.

## Appeal

Students placed on probationary status may appeal in writing to the Dean of Students within one week of the date of the letter of probation. Grounds for appeal include technical error and/or changes in temporary grades. Letters of appeal must state the reasons for appeal and must be written by the student, although advice from others may be sought in formulating the appeal.

Students dismissed from the Mason Gross School of the Arts by the school's Scholastic Standing Committee may appeal by letter to the Office of the Dean within one week of notification of the decision. Grounds for appeal include technical error, extenuating circumstances, and/or additional information not previously available to the committee. The letter of appeal must state the reasons for the appeal and must be written by the student, although students may seek advice from others while formulating the appeal.

The Scholastic Standing Committee may determine that the student has presented evidence not previously available and sufficient to require the Scholastic Standing Committee to reconsider the case, or that insufficient evidence has been presented to justify further consideration of the appeal. At the student and/or committee's request, a student may be present at the meeting of reconsideration, unaccompanied by adviser or attorney, to amplify his or her appeal request.

The committee may reinstate the student, with or without conditions, or may deny the appeal. Some of the conditions for reinstatement include a term average of 2.0 or better or no incomplete grades. The committee also may define future courses to be completed. The committee notifies the student of its decision and any conditions within one week of reconsideration. Action by the committee is final.

## **Facilities**

### **Center Office (CSB 313)**

RCDF's central office for all inquiries regarding advisement, registration, studio space reservation and much more.

### **Computer Editing Labs (CSB 331 & 303)**

All students registered in Digital Filmmaking can open an account in the Department Computer Labs on the third floors at Civic Square Building (CSB). These accounts can be accessed offsite at any time.

### **Studio Classrooms (CSB 326, 331 & 110)**

Each concentration has its own well-equipped studio classrooms in the Civic Square Building (CSB). Usually only students who are registered for classes in that concentration can access those studios and facilities.

### **Film Bureau (325C)**

Our professional filmmaking office involves students at every level of the cinematographic process. Upper level students collaborate to create auteur driven films in conjunction with prominent artists, researchers, scientists and community leaders.

The Film Bureau's hands-on approach provides technical and artistic training along with the opportunity to earn production credits. In the past our students have traveled to Spain, Thailand, Virgin Islands, Brazil and Nashville to capture unfolding stories.

## **Awards and Scholarships**

The Ray Stark Film Prize is an endowed prize established by the Ray Stark Foundation to provide financial assistance to students enrolled at Rutgers who are interested in pursuing filmmaking. Faculty and adjunct faculty select award recipients based on their academic performance, artistic portfolio and financial need

## Faculty

<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Email</b>
Pereda, Nicolás	<a href="mailto:npereda@masongross.rutgers.edu">npereda@masongross.rutgers.edu</a>
Stettner, Patrick	<a href="mailto:pstettner@masongross.rutgers.edu">pstettner@masongross.rutgers.edu</a>
Bennett, Neal	<a href="mailto:video@nealbennett.com">video@nealbennett.com</a>
Cohen, Jem	<a href="mailto:gravityhill@mindspring.com">gravityhill@mindspring.com</a>
Haimowitz, Rebecca	<a href="mailto:thisisrebecca@gmail.com">thisisrebecca@gmail.com</a>
McNair, Alana	<a href="mailto:alana.mcnair@rutgers.edu">alana.mcnair@rutgers.edu</a>
Pettengill, Sierra	<a href="mailto:sierrapettengill@gmail.com">sierrapettengill@gmail.com</a>
Piñeiro, Matías	<a href="mailto:matiaspineiro@hotmail.com">matiaspineiro@hotmail.com</a>
Schnall, Peter	<a href="mailto:pschnall@partisanpictures.com">pschnall@partisanpictures.com</a>
Smith, Alan	<a href="mailto:alanmcintyresmith@gmail.com">alanmcintyresmith@gmail.com</a>
Whilden, Shane	<a href="mailto:whilden@rci.rutgers.edu">whilden@rci.rutgers.edu</a>

CSB - Civic Square Building 33 Livingston Ave., New Brunswick (College Avenue campus)

## **Administration/Film Bureau Staff:**

**Daves, Karina**

CSB 313 - (848) 932-5245

karina.daves@rutgers.edu

**Kurzynowski, Rachel**

Production Associate

CSB-325C - (848) 932-5274

rachelkurzynowski@yahoo.com

## **Facilities Staff:**

**Unit Computing Manager**

Shane Whilden

CSB 238 - 848-932-5204

whilden@rci.rutgers.edu

## **Academic Calendar**

### **Fall 2015**

Sept. 1, 2015	<b>FALL SEMESTER BEGINS</b>
Sept. 7	<b>Labor Day ALL UNIVERSITY OFFICES CLOSED</b>
Tuesday, Sept. 8	Change of designation day - Monday classes meet today.
Wed, Nov. 25	Change of Designation Day - Friday classes meet today.
Nov. 26 - 27	<b>Thanksgiving Recess</b>
Dec. 10	Regular classes end.
Dec. 15 - 22	Fall 2015 Exam Period.
Dec 23 - Jan 18, 2016	<b>Winter Recess</b>

### **Spring 2016**

January 19 , 2016	<b>SPRING SEMESTER BEGINS</b>
March 12-20	<b>Spring Recess</b>
May 2	Regular Classes End
May 5-11	Spring 2016 Exam Period
May 3	New Lens Film Festival
May 15, 2016	<b>UNIVERSITY COMMENCEMENT</b>

## **Sample BFA in Digital Filmmaking Four-Year Plan 121 Credits (class of 2019)**

*All students should consult with Karina Daves for advisement throughout their course of study; this plan is meant as a guide only.*

### **BFA First Year (31 credits)**

- 5 Film Production Courses
- 1 Gender, Race & Class in the Media
- 1 Video Editing Lab (1 credit)
- 2 Cinema Studies Courses
- 2 Liberal Arts

### **BFA Sophomore Year (30 credits)**

- 5 Film Production Courses
- 1 Visual Arts Elective
- 1 Cinema Studies Course
- 1 Art History 106
- 1 Elective
- 1 Liberal Arts

### **BFA Junior Year (30 credits)**

- 4 Film Production Courses
- 1 Cinema Studies Elective
- 1 Visual Arts Elective
- 1 Liberal Arts
- 2 Electives

### **BFA Senior Year (30 credits)**

- 2 Senior Film Thesis Courses
- 1 Film Production Course
- 1 Cinema Studies Course
- 1 Visual Arts Elective
- 2 Liberal Arts



## 2 Electives

### Helpful Websites

Academic Calendar	<a href="http://scheduling.rutgers.edu/academic.htm">scheduling.rutgers.edu/academic.htm</a>
Degree Navigator	<a href="http://nbdn.rutgers.edu">nbdn.rutgers.edu</a>
Directions to campus	<a href="http://maps.rutgers.edu">maps.rutgers.edu</a>
Financial Aid	<a href="http://studentaid.rutgers.edu">studentaid.rutgers.edu</a>
Health Services–Counseling (CAPS)	<a href="http://health.rutgers.edu">health.rutgers.edu</a>
Learning Centers	<a href="http://rlc.rutgers.edu">rlc.rutgers.edu</a>
Libraries	<a href="http://libraries.rutgers.edu">libraries.rutgers.edu</a>
Mason Gross School of the Arts	<a href="http://masongross.rutgers.edu">masongross.rutgers.edu</a>
Parking	<a href="http://rudots.rutgers.edu">rudots.rutgers.edu</a>
Registrar	<a href="http://nbregistrar.rutgers.edu">nbregistrar.rutgers.edu</a>
RU Connection ID Cards	<a href="http://ruconnection.rutgers.edu">ruconnection.rutgers.edu</a>
RU-info	<a href="http://ruinfo.rutgers.edu">ruinfo.rutgers.edu</a>
RU General Search	<a href="http://search.rutgers.edu">search.rutgers.edu</a>
Schedule of Classes	<a href="http://acs.rutgers.edu/soc">acs.rutgers.edu/soc</a>
Student Employment	<a href="http://studentwork.rutgers.edu">studentwork.rutgers.edu</a>
Web Registration (WebReg)	<a href="http://webreg.rutgers.edu">webreg.rutgers.edu</a>
Writing Centers	<a href="http://wp.rutgers.edu">wp.rutgers.edu</a>

