

Rutgers
Filmmaking
Center

Undergraduate BFA Handbook

updated 8/2020

Rutgers Filmmaking Center

B.F.A. Filmmaking Handbook 2017-present

Introduction	4
General Information	5
Registration	5
Degree Requirements Audits	5
Adding & Dropping Classes	5
Academic Warning Notices	5
Appealing Grade	6
Film Screening Attendance	7
Production Credit	8
RCDF Undergraduate Degree	9
BFA Program	9
BFA Program Requirements	9
BFA Degree Requirements	9
BFA Liberal Arts Requirements	9
BFA Electives	9
Independent Study	10
Internship Program	10
Rutgers University Requirements in English	10
Byrne First-Year Seminar Program	10
BFA Filmmaking Review System	11
Artistic Review	11
Sophomore Review	11
Junior Review	11
Senior Thesis Review	12
Artistic Probation and Dismissal	13
General Principles	13
Artistic Probation	13
Artistic Dismissal	13
Academic Probation and Dismissal	14
Academic Probation	14
Academic Dismissal	14
Appeal	14
BFA Showcase & Film Festival	15
Facilities	16
Facilities	16
Computer Editing Labs	17
Studio Classrooms	17
Documentary Film Lab	17

Equipment	18
Faculty	19
Administrative /Lab Staff	20
Sample BFA Four Year Plan	21
Helpful Websites	22

Introduction

We are excited to welcome you to the Rutgers Filmmaking program. Over the next four years, we will embark on a journey of learning, collaboration, friendship, and community. We are looking forward to the upcoming year, and we are doing everything that we can to make sure your first year is as meaningful and successful as possible. Besides getting a solid grounding in technical production and film theory, you will have a chance to take risks, develop your unique artistic voice, refine your sensibilities, and formulate complex responses to the world around you. You will also have the chance to expand your learning through the expansive liberal arts courses offered at Rutgers University.

Please take a moment to review this handbook carefully, there is a lot of valuable information gathered here; we have included several changes (which are now highlighted) due to safety measures and COVID pandemic planning. The COVID pandemic presents us with many challenges. Still, our mission has always been to deliver the highest quality academic experience, and we will continue to meet those standards. We are committed to exploring innovative ways for remote student engagement and discovering different ways to build community despite our physical distance.

Also, in this historical moment of action and reflection, we as a program are reexamining our ways, we will be reviewing our curriculum to make sure we include more voices of under-represented filmmakers and demonstrate a diversity of race, ethnicity, gender identity, orientation, and abilities in the type of readings and work screened in our classes. And we are entirely committed to long-term changes, in which we can develop a more culturally inclusive program and disrupt patterns of inequity. Our solemn responsibility is to create the conditions that enable all of our students to learn, thrive, and develop to their fullest potential.

When it is safe, we hope you will take advantage of our proximity to New York City and Philadelphia. These two cities are steeped in a rich history, with internationally acclaimed cinemas, theatres, museums, and galleries. The vision and energy that emanate from these cities and institutions are for you to absorb, critique, and redefine, raising your awareness on the road to becoming exceptional artists and filmmakers.

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 way forward with regards to theory and practice, but also to enrich and cultivate your creative mind. All the staff and faculty at the Rutgers Filmmaking Center are here to support you during the time we are fortunate to share with you, and we look forward to fostering your professional exploration.

Best of luck for the year,

Patrick Stettner
Chair, Rutgers Filmmaking Center

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). 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). If you are unsure about which courses you need, contact Karina F. Daves at kdaves@mgsa.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 Student Affairs Coordinator 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) for exact dates each year.

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 of Administration, Karina F. Daves.

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.

Film Screening Attendance

As a part of core classes, Intro to Film Production II, Intermediate Film Production I & II, Advanced Directing I & II and the Senior Thesis I & II –you will be required to attend screenings connected with these core classes. They are listed as the second meeting time on your schedule. In response to COVID-19, these screenings will be hosted via Zoom, with attendance taken and the room locked after 15 min. Links to films will be sent out on the Wednesday before your scheduled Friday class, and students will be expected to watch the film prior to attending.

First year and transfer students **do not attend** the weekly screenings **during your first semester**. Rather, all students registered for Intro to Film Production I will attend Friday workshops from 10-2 PM in lieu of screenings. Upon your second semester, all students will begin to attend these film screenings.

Attendance is required. Although final grading is at the discretion of the professor, the following protocol will be administered regarding grade penalty when screenings are missed:

# of Screenings Missed	Grade Deduction	Example
3 or more	½ a Letter Grade	A → B+
5	Full letter grade	A → B
6 or more	Automatic "C"	A→C

Students in the program as a third & fourth year, Junior & Senior, only have to attend **6** screenings out for each semester. **6** for the Fall semester and **6** for the Spring semester. See chart below for Juniors & Seniors in the film program.

# of Screenings Missed	Grade Deduction	Example
1	½ a Letter Grade	A → B+
2	Full letter grade	A → B
3	Automatic "C"	A→C

Internship & Screening Conflict

For information on Internships and how to get them approved for credit towards your degree, please refer to our **Internship Handbook**.

Juniors & Seniors that are participating in an internship during the Fall or Spring semester that requires them to miss the Friday screening will have to do the following:

- Show proof of internship placement to Karina F. Daves by emailing the following:
 - Contract – must include hours
 - Internship Description
 - Proof that you are receiving credit for it
- Attend 3 screenings
- Write 3 one page summaries for any of the films that were shown during the semester at the VFS. Most films are online or can be purchased.

If students are unable to attend **ANY** Friday screenings, they must then:

- Write 6 one page summaries of films showcased during the Visiting Filmmaker series.
- Most films can be purchased online. Again, students will write a total of SIX – one page – summaries.
- These summaries must be submitted to their core course instructor at the end of the semester before the last day of class. That is either your Advanced Directing or Senior Thesis instructor.

If students fail to follow any of these protocols, they will automatically be penalized for missing the screenings which can result in grade deductions or even failure of the course.

Production Credit

RFC requires BFA students to add a final title card to all exercises and all films produced at the program, it should read as follows for 5 seconds:

Produced at the Rutgers Filmmaking Center
Copyright 20XX (year produced)
Rutgers University, The State University of New Jersey

RFC Undergraduate Degree

RFC 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 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 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 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. Please note that some requirements may differ for various BFA cohorts.

BFA Filmmaking Requirements (88 credits)

As part of the work toward the BFA degree students must complete the following: 16 Film Production Courses (64 credits), 4 Cinema Studies Courses (12 credits), 2 Visual Arts courses (8 credits), 1 Intro to Art History 106 course (3 credits) and 7 Free Electives (21 credits). *Art History (3 credits) and 2 Cinema Studies Courses (6 Credits) double dip with your Liberal Arts.

A part of your BFA is taking Film Electives within our department. There are several online courses via the Arts Online department that are offered through our degree. Please note that these online courses are online versions of courses or material that will be taught in required film classes. Online film courses do not count towards your BFA Degree.

BFA Liberal Arts Requirements (33 credits)

In addition to the 88 credits of 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). Please keep in mind that all Arts

& Humanities Liberal Arts Requirements are also BFA Film requirements so you will not have to take additional courses in this area.

BFA Electives (21 credits)

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

Independent Study

Students are only allowed to take up to 9 credits in an independent study or internship.

Transfer Students

Transfer students enrolled in both Intro to Film Production and Intermediate Film Production may not use the same material to present in both classes. This is not allowed and discouraged. Instructors of both courses are made aware of transfer students that are enrolled and share content of work.

Film Projects

Students should not use the same projects / work for other courses in the film program. For example, you should not use your Cinematography project for Intro to Film Production II.

Internships

All internship placements must go through a department review before student is allowed to start. Students are required to complete 120 logged hours at internship placement along with weekly journal entries and final paper. Supervisor must sign off on all documents. All documents will be reviewed via **Sakai**. **Students are not allowed to intern at a location that they previously were working at.**

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/>

BFA Review System & Required Showcase Submission

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 Filmmaking Center 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

At the end of the Spring semester of your Sophomore year students 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. 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 Filmmaking Program office.

Junior Review

At the end of the spring semester of your junior year, BFA 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 the second semester of their sophomore year, 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 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 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.

Senior Thesis Review

Several weeks before the end of the spring semester of the senior year, the BFA Filmmaking Program students will have a mandatory thesis artistic review with a faculty committee. Students will be responsible to upload a cut of their thesis film, usually one week before their committee meeting, and students will participate in a critique session with the faculty committee regarding their film.

Participating in this Thesis review is a requirement of the BFA program and a prerequisite for graduation.

Artistic Probation and Dismissal

General Principles

A student's progress in the BFA Filmmaking 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 any semester in a film course
- Not passing Sophomore Review.
- Not passing Junior Review.
- Not following the 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 Filmmaking Program for any of the following reasons:

- A grade of D or F 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.

BFA Showcase & New Lens Film Festival

COVID-19 Changes

Updates to the plans for BFA Fall and Spring Showcases, along with the New Lens Film Festival, will be shared with students as the year progresses. As soon we can do so in a way that ensures the health and safety of all of our students, faculty and staff, we hope to offer students the opportunity to showcase their hard work with their classmates in a fulfilling way. Please stay tuned for more updates from the center.

Fall Semester - Showcase

At the end of the Fall Semester, Sophomores and Juniors must submit one of their films to be part of the BFA Showcase, which we will host on an evening in the last week of the Fall semester. We will have one BFA Showcase for Sophomores and one for Juniors.

Spring Semester - Showcase

At the end of the Spring semester, Freshmen, Transfers and Seniors must submit one of their films to be part of the BFA Showcase, which we will host on an evening in the last week of the Spring semester. We will have one BFA Showcase for Freshmen & Transfers combined and one for Seniors.

Spring Semester – New Lens Film Festival

At the end of the Spring semester, we will host a faculty judged and selected New Lens Film Festival which will be open to all BFA students in the film program and the Rutgers University community.

Facilities

Rutgers Filmmaking cares about your safety and the safety of others. First and foremost, know that you are not required to use Rutgers Filmmaking equipment, facilities, or otherwise be onsite to fulfill the requirements of this or any other Rutgers Filmmaking course.

The use of Rutgers Filmmaking equipment and facilities is completely voluntary. However, whether using our equipment and facilities onsite or shooting on location in order to complete a class assignment, you must agree to adhere to the following safety protocols:

- Always practice social distancing of at least 6 feet.
- Wear a mask at all times. Sanitize all equipment before and after use.
- If you, or anyone in your household, is experiencing symptoms related to COVID-19, stay at home and self-quarantine for 14 days.
- If you, or anyone in your household, has contracted COVID-19, traveled internationally, or travelled to an at-risk state, stay at home and self-quarantine for at least 14 days.

Following these protocols will in no way eliminate the risk of contacting the COVID-19 virus, but they will immensely increase your safety and the safety of your peers. Anyone found not adhering to these protocols will lose facility and equipment privileges.

For up-to-date protocols for accessing RFC equipment and facilities during COVID-19, visit: <http://film.rutgers.edu>

FOR ACCESS TO RUTGERS FILMMAKING FACILITIES

1) Submit a FACILITIES CHECKOUT CONTRACT

You only need to do this once at the beginning of the term to gain swipe access

Allow at least 3 business-days for a confirmation email

2A) For computer lab stations, self-book using via the RFC FACILITIES CALENDAR

CSB325B & CSB239 are single-use, CSB331 has two stations available

- ***Students are allowed 5hr blocks with a one-hour buffer for ventilation***
- ***There is a limit of 15hrs/week to allow fair access to everyone***
- ***Requests must be made at least 3 business days in advance***

2B) For post-production suites, submit a RFC FACILITIES REQUEST FORM

- ***This is a resource for Juniors/Seniors only***
- ***Allow at least 3 business-days for a confirmation email***

3) Submit a LIABILITY RELEASE WAIVER 24hrs before your facilities appointment

- ***Failure to do so and your swipe access will be revoked***

Centers Office (CSB 313)

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

Computer Editing & Printing (Second Floor Labs & 331)

All students registered in Filmmaking program can utilize the labs on the second and third floor. You will log-in with your net id and pw for these computers. Keep in mind that the system will not save any work for future use.

Studios & Classrooms (CSB 326, 327, 331 & 110)

Each of these studios/classrooms are where your classes will take place as well as spaces that you can reserve for filming and critique.

Documentary Film Lab (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 Documentary Film Lab is a 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, Mexico and Greenland to capture unfolding stories.

Equipment Rental Office (307)

The need for remote learning has changed the usual dynamic of the equipment room and equipment checkout. Updates on changes and protocols will be posted to <http://film.rutgers.edu/> as they come throughout the academic year.

All BFA Filmmaking students have the ability to check out equipment for a two-day rental period. The equipment office hours change every semester. For hours and

policies, please see the equipment office during operating hours.

FOR ACCESS TO RUTGERS FILMMAKING EQUIPMENT

1) Submit an EQUIPMENT CHECKOUT CONTRACT

*****You only need to do this once at the beginning of the term*****

2) Submit an EQUIPMENT REQUEST FORM

*****Allow at least 3 business-days for a confirmation email*****

3) Sign Up for an EQUIPMENT PICKUP & RETURN APPOINTMENT

*****Equipment pickup/returns happen outside and require an appointment****

4) Submit a LIABILITY RELEASE WAIVER 24hrs before your pickup appointment

*****You need to do this every time you pickup equipment*****

Sound Mix Suite (310)

Our Sound Mix Suite can be currently reserved by Juniors & Seniors. Please check out key with the Equipment Rental Office.

Color Correction Suite (303)

Our Color Correction Suite can be currently reserved by Juniors & Seniors. Please check out key with the Equipment Rental Office.

Printing

In order for students to print in Civic Square Building (CSB) you will have to log-in for the first time and attempt to print once in black and white. It will alert the system to create your printing account. All students will be given a credit of \$18.75 to print pages at CSB for the entire year. All printed pages will only be able to be picked up on the second floor labs. You will be able to print remotely from the third floor, however, pick up will still be on the second floor.

RFC Faculty & Instructors

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Sample BFA in Filmmaking Four-Year Plan 121 Credits (present)

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 (30 credits)

- 2 Intro to Film Production Courses
- 1 Cinematography Course
- 1 Screenwriting: Short Film Course
- 1 4D Fundamentals Course
- 2 Cinema Studies Courses
- 2 Liberal Arts

BFA Sophomore Year (33 credits)

- 2 Intermediate Film Production Courses
- 1 Sound Course
- 2 Film Electives
- 1 Art & Design Elective
- 1 Art History 106
- 2 Electives (free)
- 1 Liberal Arts

BFA Junior Year (29 credits)

- 2 Advanced Directing Production Courses
- 1 Image Post Production Course
- 1 Film Elective
- 1 Cinema Studies Elective
- 2 Liberal Arts
- 2 Electives (free)

BFA Senior Year (29 credits)

- 2 Senior Film Thesis Courses
- 1 Film Elective
- 1 Cinema Studies Course
- 2 Liberal Arts
- 3 Electives (free)

*Please keep in mind that you must graduate with a total of **121** credits or over.

Helpful Websites

RU COVID-19 Updates	coronavirus.rutgers.edu
Mason Gross COVID-19 Updates	masongross.rutgers.edu/covid19
Academic Calendar	scheduling.rutgers.edu/academic.htm
Degree Navigator	nbdn.rutgers.edu
Directions to campus	maps.rutgers.edu
Financial Aid	studentaid.rutgers.edu
Health Services–Counseling (CAPS)	health.rutgers.edu
Learning Centers	rlc.rutgers.edu
Libraries	libraries.rutgers.edu
Mason Gross School of the Arts	masongross.rutgers.edu
Parking	rudots.rutgers.edu
Registrar	nbregistrar.rutgers.edu
RU Connection ID Cards	ruconnection.rutgers.edu
RU-info	ruinfo.rutgers.edu
RU General Search	search.rutgers.edu
Schedule of Classes	acs.rutgers.edu/soc
Student Employment	studentwork.rutgers.edu
Web Registration (WebReg)	webreg.rutgers.edu
Writing Centers	wp.rutgers.edu