



2022 - 2023

**Thesis Student
Guidelines**

Film



Letter from the Thesis Committee

Welcome Class of 2023!

These past few years have been a challenge for us all. Fortunately, SVA will be back in-person in the for your thesis year and we anticipate celebrating a real return to 'normal.'

Many things are changing for the better this year and will continue to do so over the summer and next semester. This includes acquiring some great new gear, a wholly digital system for reserving equipment and studios, and changes in policy that will make it easier to get things done. We are moving as fast as possible, but the most important thing to know is that **if you have a question, if you need something, if you think you cannot do something – come to us. The thesis committee is here to make things work for you.**

The SVA Film Thesis Program is a unique experience and can become the foundation of a successful career. It represents your chance to complete one or more projects over the course of a full year with all the support, guidance and resources that SVA can provide. We encourage and support any type of project you choose: narrative fiction, documentary, experimental, etc. — as long as the work demonstrates commitment, deep understanding of content, craft, technique, and quality.

Now is the time to go with your heart and allow yourself to do work you are passionate about. No matter what your specialization, that's what builds excellence. You want your work to show the time and effort you put into it.

It is not necessary – nor enough -- to have significant financial resources to make a good film. The Department and the School offer a very limited number of grants – not enough to make a movie, only to help. Plan your budget carefully and pay attention to when grant deadlines are announced.

We all have the highest expectations for you as individuals, and as a class. We look forward to working closely with you and hope to help you realize the success you have already worked so hard to achieve.

Sincerely,

The Thesis Committee
Mary Lee Grisanti, Acting Chair
Joan Brooker-Marks
Kamil Dobrowolski
George LaVoo

THESIS DEADLINES – 2022-2023

October 21 – All students making films must submit no less than a first-draft to filmthesis@sva.edu and their thesis advisor; documentarians must submit a detailed proposal. (We have examples if needed.)

October 28 – Pre-production grant deadline

November 18 – Final draft screenplay must be submitted to filmthesis@sva.edu.

December 11 – Students not making films should provide a 2 paragraph summary of the projects they are working on.

Productions scheduled after Winter Break by permission of the Thesis Committee only.

January 13 – Assembly edits due.

January 27 – Thesis priority on equipment ends.

February 17 – Rough cuts due.

After Spring Break narrative films should be picture locked and begin sound design, color and titles/effects.

April 17 – Final films due at noon.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Directors

Directors are required to direct one 10-20 minute production that demonstrates an advanced level of craft and technique. Music videos and advertisements are not permitted. **You must turn your script in for Thesis Committee approval at least 3 weeks prior to principal photography to the email address filmthesis@sva.edu.** Screenplays submitted with less than a 3-week window will not be approved. **The email submissions MUST include the information from the top of the Thesis Approval Form.**

Editors

Editors are in general required to edit two SVA Thesis projects. However, one project will be considered based on length and complexity - only the Thesis Committee can decide if the project qualifies. Editors are responsible for supervising and planning all stages of the post-production. **If an editor is directing a film to fulfill Thesis, they must follow all of the deadlines and guidelines for directors.**

Cinematographers

Cinematographers must function as Director of Photography on two SVA Thesis Projects. As such, they are responsible for the visual interpretation of the project, lighting, the camera crew, camera equipment selection, and operation. Cinematographers are also required to collaborate on the color grading of films they have shot. **If a cinematographer is directing a project to fulfill Thesis, they must follow all of the deadlines and guidelines for directors.**

Sound Recordists & Designers

Sound majors must record and mix production sound on at least three thesis films and must do post-production sound on at least one thesis film. **If sound majors are directing a film to fulfill their Thesis requirement, they must follow all of the deadlines and guidelines for directors.**

Screenwriters

Screenwriters must complete a polished final draft of a full-length 90 to 120 page screenplay or pilot +2 episodes of TV or web series. **If a screenwriter is directing a film, they must follow all of the deadlines and guidelines for directors.**

All questions should be directed to our Thesis Coordinator, Mark Crowell, filmthesis@sva.edu.