TRANSFORMATION FILM INSTITUTE

2026 Academic Calendar & Programs

Faith-centered, professional film education combining live online instruction and hands-on, in-person productions. *All classes are one-hour live Zoom sessions, with one week of in-person on-set production.*

Academic Structure

- **Three Semesters per Year:**
    - Spring
    - Summer
    - Fall
- **Each semester includes:**
    - Live Zoom classes with industry professionals
    - In-person production-intensive

2026 Academic Calendar

Semester	Classes Begin	Classes End	In-Person Production
Spring	Jan 27, 2026	Apr 16, 2026	Dallas, TX: Apr 26–May 1
Summer	May 12, 2026	Jul 23, 2026	Dallas, TX: Aug 9–Aug 14
Vacation Break	— Aug 15	–Sep 14	Institute closed
Fall	Sep 15, 2026	Nov 20, 2026	Nov 29–Dec 4

Weekly Class Schedule

Day	Class	Time
Tuesday	Advanced Cinematography	6:00–7:00 PM
	Advanced Directing	7:15–8:15 PM
Wednesday	Advanced Post-Production	6:00–7:00 PM
	Advanced Acting	7:15–8:15 PM
Thursday	Advanced Screenwriting	6:00–7:00 PM
	Faith-Based Independent Filmmaker	7:15–8:15 PM

Advanced Cinematography

Master the Art of Visual Storytelling

Course Description

The **Advanced Cinematography** course is designed for filmmakers who want to elevate their visual storytelling and work at a professional level. This course trains students in the creative and technical disciplines of cinematography, focusing on how camera, lighting, and movement shape emotion, mood, and narrative.

Students learn how to translate story into visual language while working within the realities of professional film production. Emphasis is placed on making intentional visual choices that support character, theme, and tone—whether working with limited resources or full production crews. The course bridges artistry and practicality, preparing students to operate confidently on real sets.

What You'll Learn

- **Advanced Camera Systems & Lenses**
  Gain hands-on knowledge of professional camera systems and lens choices. Learn how sensor size, focal length, and camera movement influence perspective, depth, and emotional impact.
- **Narrative Lighting Techniques**
  Learn how to shape light to serve story and character. Topics include motivated lighting, contrast, color temperature, mood creation, and lighting setups for both controlled and practical locations.
- **Shot Composition & Camera Movement**
  Explore how framing, blocking, and movement guide audience attention and reinforce storytelling. Students learn when to move the camera, when to stay still, and how to use composition intentionally.
- **Visual Continuity & Coverage**
  Understand how to maintain visual consistency across scenes and setups, ensuring continuity while providing editors with strong storytelling options.
- **On-Set Workflow & Collaboration**
  Learn how cinematographers collaborate with directors, gaffers, and camera crews. Students gain insight into professional set etiquette, communication, and problem-solving under production pressures.

Who This Course Is For

- Cinematographers seeking advanced narrative training
- Directors who want stronger visual control of their films
- Filmmakers transitioning into director of photography roles
- Visual storytellers committed to cinematic excellence

Outcome

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Make intentional visual storytelling choices
- Design lighting and camera setups that support narrative
- Communicate effectively with directors and crew
- Operate confidently within professional production environments

Advanced Directing

Lead the Story. Lead the Set.

Course Description

The **Advanced Directing** course is designed for filmmakers ready to step into leadership with confidence, clarity, and creative authority. This course goes beyond theory to focus on the real-world responsibilities of a director—guiding performances, shaping story, and managing collaboration on a professional film set.

Students learn how to translate a script into a compelling visual and emotional experience while leading actors and crew with purpose. Emphasis is placed on communication, preparation, and decision-making under the pressures of production. Directors are trained to lead with both excellence and integrity.

What You'll Learn

- **Working with Actors**
  Learn how to communicate effectively with actors, develop trust, and guide authentic performances. Students explore rehearsal techniques, blocking, and emotional continuity while respecting the creative process of the performer.
- **Scene Breakdown & Shot Planning**
  Develop the ability to analyze scripts scene by scene, identifying story beats, objectives, and visual opportunities. Students learn how to create shot lists, storyboards, and shooting plans that serve both story and schedule.
- **Directing Performances for the Camera**
  Understand how performance translates on screen and how subtle adjustments can dramatically impact storytelling. Students learn how to shape tone, pacing, and emotional arcs while maintaining continuity.
- **Creative Leadership on Set**
  Train to lead confidently in a collaborative environment. Topics include working with department heads, managing time and resources, problem-solving under pressure, and maintaining creative vision while serving the story and the team.

Who This Course Is For

- Aspiring and working directors
- Filmmakers transitioning into directing roles
- Producers and writers who want stronger on-set leadership skills
- Creatives seeking to lead faith-driven stories with professionalism

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Outcome

By the end of this course, students will be equipped to:

- Lead a film set with confidence and clarity
- Communicate vision effectively to cast and crew
- Prepare thoroughly for production
- Direct performances that serve story and audience

Advanced Post-Production

Shape the Final Story

Course Description

The **Advanced Post-Production** course trains students in the art and discipline of shaping a film in the edit—where story, performance, sound, and visuals are refined into a finished cinematic experience. This course emphasizes **professional post-production workflows** used in narrative filmmaking, with hands-on instruction using **DaVinci Resolve**, one of the industry's leading editing and color platforms.

Students learn how editorial decisions impact emotion, pacing, and clarity, and how post-production serves as the final rewrite of the script. Through guided instruction and practical exercises, students gain confidence navigating the post-production pipeline from first assembly through final delivery.

What You'll Learn

- **Narrative Editing in DaVinci Resolve**
  Learn professional editing techniques using DaVinci Resolve, including timeline organization, performance selection, pacing, continuity, and storytelling through editorial structure. Students explore how to build scenes that support character, tension, and emotional flow.
- **Sound Design & Audio Workflow**
  Understand the fundamentals of sound design and audio post, including dialogue cleanup, ambient sound, sound effects, and basic mixing techniques. Students learn how to manage audio within Resolve and prepare projects for professional sound finishing.
- **Color Correction & Visual Consistency**
  Learn the fundamentals of color correction using DaVinci Resolve's powerful color tools. Topics include balancing footage, matching shots, correcting exposure, and establishing a consistent visual tone that supports the story.
- **Professional Post-Production Workflow**
  Gain insight into the full post-production pipeline, including media management, backups, collaboration workflows, versioning, and exporting deliverables. Students learn best practices for working with directors, producers, and colorists.
- **Festival & Distribution Preparation**
  Learn how to prepare films for festivals and distribution, including export settings, formatting requirements, and quality control. Students gain an understanding of deliverables needed for festivals, streaming platforms, and independent distribution.

Who This Course Is For

- Editors seeking advanced narrative training
- Filmmakers who want greater control over the final cut
- Directors and producers looking to better collaborate with editors
- Creatives preparing films for festivals, streaming, or release

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Outcome

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Edit narrative films confidently in DaVinci Resolve
- Shape performances and pacing through editorial choices
- Integrate sound and color to enhance storytelling
- Deliver professional-quality exports ready for festivals and distribution

Advanced Acting

Acting for the Camera

Course Description

The **Advanced Acting** course is designed to prepare performers for professional work in film and television, with a strong emphasis on **acting for the camera**. This course focuses on the technical, emotional, and collaborative demands of screen acting, helping actors deliver authentic performances within a production environment.

Students learn how subtle choices translate on screen, how to adjust performance for framing and editing, and how to collaborate effectively with directors and fellow actors. The course also equips non-actors—such as directors and writers—with a deeper understanding of performance, strengthening overall storytelling.

What You'll Learn

- **On-Camera Acting Technique**
  Learn how performance translates through the lens, including working with close-ups, medium shots, and wide shots. Students explore eyelines, continuity, and emotional consistency across takes.
- **Character Development & Script Analysis**
  Develop layered characters through script breakdown, objectives, obstacles, and emotional arcs. Students learn to make intentional choices that serve both character and story.
- **Working with Directors**
  Understand how to take direction, adjust performances quickly, and collaborate effectively on set. Students learn professional set etiquette and communication.
- **Emotional Authenticity & Continuity**
  Train to maintain emotional truth across multiple takes and shooting days, while working within the technical constraints of production.
- **On-Set Professionalism**
  Learn industry expectations, preparation practices, and behavior required on professional film sets.

Who This Course Is For

- Aspiring and working film actors
- Stage actors transitioning to on-camera work
- Directors seeking stronger performance skills
- Writers wanting deeper insight into character and dialogue

Outcome

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Deliver confident, natural performances on camera
- Collaborate effectively with directors and cast
- Adapt performances for technical demands
- Approach professional film and television sets with confidence

Advanced Screenwriting

Write Stories That Move Audiences

Course Description

The **Advanced Screenwriting** course is designed for writers who want to craft compelling, production-ready scripts for film. This course focuses on **story structure, character development, and dialogue**, with a unique emphasis on **faith-based storytelling without clichés**.

Students learn how to tell authentic, meaningful stories that resonate with audiences while remaining honest, nuanced, and cinematic. The course emphasizes writing scripts that can be produced, not just read.

What You'll Learn

- **Story Structure for Film**
  Learn feature and short film structure, pacing, and story arcs. Students explore how acts, sequences, and turning points support emotional impact.
- **Character & Theme Development**
  Develop complex, believable characters whose journeys reflect deeper themes without becoming preachy or predictable.
- **Dialogue That Sounds Real**
  Learn to write dialogue that reveals character, advances plot, and feels natural on screen.
- **Faith-Based Storytelling with Authenticity**
  Explore how to incorporate faith, values, and spiritual themes organically—avoiding stereotypes and surface-level messaging.
- **Writing for Production**
  Learn how to write scripts that are practical to produce, considering budget, locations, and production realities.

Who This Course Is For

- Aspiring and experienced screenwriters
- Filmmakers developing original projects
- Directors and producers seeking stronger scripts
- Creatives called to faith-driven storytelling

Outcome

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Write film-ready scripts with confidence
- Develop authentic characters and themes
- Communicate faith-based messages with depth and subtlety
- Prepare scripts for production, pitching, and development

Faith-Based Independent Filmmakers

Build Films with Purpose and Sustainability

Course Description

The **Faith-Based Independent Filmmakers** course is designed to equip filmmakers with the creative, business, and strategic tools needed to succeed in one of the **highest-return genres in independent filmmaking**. Faith-based films consistently demonstrate strong audience engagement, built-in distribution communities, and a proven track record of **high return on investment (ROI)** when produced responsibly.

This course explores how filmmakers can tell meaningful, faith-driven stories while operating within sustainable independent film models. Students learn how to develop, finance, produce, and distribute films that serve both mission and market—without compromising artistic integrity or spiritual authenticity.

What You'll Learn

- **Understanding the Faith-Based Film Market**
  Learn why faith-based films continue to outperform expectations in the independent space. Topics include audience behavior, church-based marketing, community-driven distribution, and case studies of successful faith-based projects.
- **Producing with Purpose and Profitability**
  Gain insight into building budgets, controlling costs, and making production decisions that maximize ROI while maintaining production value.
- **Fundraising & Financing Strategies**
  Learn practical approaches to raising funds for independent films, including private investment, donor-supported models, partnerships, and faith-based funding networks.
- **Distribution & Audience Engagement**
  Explore multiple distribution pathways, including theatrical, faith-based platforms, streaming, grassroots screenings, and hybrid release strategies.
- **Faith-Driven Storytelling Without Compromise**
  Learn how to create authentic faith-based stories that resonate with audiences without becoming preachy or formulaic. Emphasis is placed on truth, character, and emotional honesty.
- **Navigating the Industry as a Faith-Based Creative**
  Understand how to operate professionally within the broader film industry while staying true to your values, calling, and creative voice.

Who This Course Is For

- Independent filmmakers seeking sustainable careers
- Producers interested in faith-based film financing and distribution
- Directors and writers developing purpose-driven projects
- Creatives who want to align faith, storytelling, and business

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Outcome

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand why faith-based films are among the highest ROI genres
- Develop projects that attract both audiences and investors
- Navigate fundraising, production, and distribution with confidence
- Create films that are financially responsible and spiritually impactful

Why Faith-Based Films Matter

Faith-based films serve a **large, passionate, and historically underserved global audience** that actively seeks entertainment aligned with their values. Unlike many mainstream audiences, this community does not passively consume content—it **shows up, spreads the word, and financially supports** films that reflect its beliefs and worldview.

When executed with **strong storytelling, authentic characters, and professional production values**, faith-based films frequently outperform expectations, often achieving returns that exceed those of higher-budget independent projects. This success is driven by several key factors: built-in community engagement, grassroots marketing through churches and faith networks, and lower production costs paired with highly motivated audiences.

Additionally, faith-based films tend to enjoy **longer shelf lives** than many independent films. They continue to generate revenue through theatrical re-releases, streaming platforms, educational licensing, and community screenings—extending their financial and cultural impact well beyond initial release windows.

For independent filmmakers, this creates a **rare intersection of purpose and sustainability**. Faith-based filmmaking allows creatives to tell meaningful, values-driven stories while operating within a genre that rewards discipline, audience connection, and responsible production practices. When approached with excellence and authenticity, faith-based films offer a powerful pathway to both **mission-driven storytelling and long-term viability** in the film industry.