The Department of Theatre, Film and Television offers a fully integrated approach to critical and creative work in performance and recorded media. We provide a unique environment in which stage and screen are explored from artistic, scientific, theoretical and historical perspectives.

TFTV is an innovative and prestigious enterprise built on the University of York’s existing high quality theatre and film initiatives. Our postgraduate programmes provide masterclass teaching from industry professionals and offer a constantly evolving dialogue between theory and practice, while regular seminars with leading researchers provide insight into historical and formal analysis. Together these elements provide you with a wholly rounded understanding of your chosen discipline in a unique and dynamic setting.

Special resources

The Department’s new production and performance centre is situated at the heart of the University’s campus on Heslington East. It features industry-standard production and postproduction facilities with 24-hour access. These include:

- a professional scenic stage theatre, seating over 200, with all related support spaces
- a multipurpose black box theatre/sound stage with a full lighting grid and gantry as well as a two-wall cyclorama to accommodate traditional and special effects film shoots
- two fully equipped rehearsal rooms
- a digital cinema screening theatre with full surround sound and state-of-the-art digital projection
- two broadcast-ready HD television studios with industry-standard equipment
- a postproduction lab featuring Final Cut Pro Studio, Pro Tools, Logic Pro, Nuke, After Effects and other leading industry packages
- high-end picture finishing suites, including Digital Vision Film Master and Autodesk Smoke, that can master programmes up to 4K resolution
- professional audio recording suites featuring live rooms and bespoke Foley and ADR performance facilities as well as mixdown theatres
- Red Digital Cinema Camera configured for professional feature film production and multiple industry-standard camera systems for broadcast-ready location HD production
- a wide range of professional audio equipment for mono, stereo and surround sound recording both in studio and on location.

Please see our website for full details.

The Department also has its own theatre company, Out of the Blue, in which all postgraduates have the opportunity to be involved.

Career prospects

Our Masters portfolio is guided by a strong commitment to the integration of high-level academic education with industry-relevant training, providing students with the necessary knowledge, skills, curiosity and initiative to pursue careers in theatre, film, television and other industries where communicative media have a central role.
Programmes overview

Each programme will enable you to develop a strong portfolio of academic and transferable skills. The MA in Theatre: Writing, Directing and Performance, the MA in Digital Film and Television Production and the two MA/MSc in Postproduction programmes offer intensive training for jobs in the creative industries as well as a strong platform to pursue further postgraduate studies and a career in higher education. The MA in Contemporary Cinema and Television analyses film and television from a variety of perspectives and provides training suitable for doctoral studies and for employment in the media industries.

MA in Contemporary Cinema and Television

This MA provides you with an opportunity to study cinema and television from a variety of perspectives, drawing on the various traditions of film and television studies. The programme has a strong focus on contemporary issues and will give you the knowledge and techniques necessary to conduct research at an advanced level, as well as providing you with skills appropriate for a range of media-related careers.

Teaching is conducted through seminars, lectures and screenings. You will be introduced to a range of theoretical issues and methodological approaches relevant to researching and analysing cinema and television, as well as examining a range of key current issues relevant to these media as expressive forms of art and culture, dynamic popular entertainments, cutting-edge technologies and increasingly globalised creative industries. Other modules draw upon recent and current research activities of the teaching staff which include developments in contemporary British cinema such as industrial, aesthetic, representational and policy issues; the significance of contemporary television audiences with a focus on meaning and emotion; and the challenges and opportunities facing small national cinemas via a range of examples from around the world. You will also explore the processes and practice of storytelling and adaptation across film, television and theatre. Finally, you will research and write a 20,000-word dissertation on a topic of your own choosing.

Your background

The MA is designed, in the main, for those who have first degrees in the humanities or social sciences (although applicants from other backgrounds will be considered).

MA in Digital Film and Television Production

This programme provides you with the opportunity to develop the skills necessary to write, direct, shoot and edit films to a professional industry standard. Taught by experienced practitioners, the latest professional techniques, technologies and workflows are examined in detail in a hands-on setting.

You will gain an in-depth understanding of the aesthetic, technical and practical skills of fiction and non-fiction production, as well as a solid grounding in the development of project ideas, stories and scripts that lie at the heart of successful filmmaking. In addition, you will also gain a rich appreciation of the evolution of film and television grammars from historical and theoretical perspectives, enabling you to be a more effective storyteller. You will work through all phases of the production process – from concept development and pitching, through script development and preproduction, to production and postproduction and programme assessment – in both individual and group project settings. Through using the latest in digital film systems from Red, Digital Vision and Autodesk, you will get first-hand experience with equipment widely used in the industry. Masterclass sessions with top production professionals will provide you with additional insight and complement the taught components.

Your background

You will be expected to have good existing knowledge of film, video or TV production. This may have been gained via a first degree in a related discipline or through professional practice.

MA/MSc in Postproduction with specialisation in Visual Effects

This dynamic programme provides an in-depth exploration of both the postproduction and sound design processes for feature film and broadcast television.

You will receive a strong aesthetic, theoretical and technical grounding in the nature of sound as well as its relationship to picture and role in the editing process. Run alongside the MA/MSc in Postproduction with specialisation in Visual Effects, programme modules include hands-on application of industry-standard techniques and tools including Final Cut Pro for editing and Pro Tools, Logic Pro and Pure Data for audio. Location and studio recording, with its many variants including Foley and ADR, are examined in both stereo and surround contexts. Guest sessions with key industry personnel further enhance the learning experience by providing insight into current professional practice. Previous visitors have come from the BBC, Fairlight, Pinewood Studios, Prime Focus and many other award-winning companies.

Your background

You will be expected to have some existing knowledge of audio media production. This may have been gained via a first degree in a related discipline or through professional practice.

MA/MSc in Postproduction with specialisation in Sound Design

This unique programme provides a detailed examination of both the postproduction and sound design processes for feature film and broadcast television.

You will receive a strong aesthetic, theoretical and technical grounding in the nature of sound as well as its relationship to picture and role in the editing process. Run alongside the MA/MSc in Postproduction with specialisation in Visual Effects, programme modules include hands-on application of industry-standard techniques and tools including Final Cut Pro for editing and Pro Tools, Logic Pro and Pure Data for audio. Location and studio recording, with its many variants including Foley and ADR, are examined in both stereo and surround contexts. Guest sessions with key industry personnel further enhance the learning experience by providing insight into current professional practice. Previous visitors have come from the BBC, Fairlight, Pinewood Studios, Prime Focus and many other award-winning companies.

Your background

You will be expected to have some existing knowledge of audio media production. This may have been gained via a first degree in a related discipline or through professional practice.

“Being a postgraduate here is fantastic; the sheer wealth of facilities is incredible, offering so many outlets to develop your artistic talent. Since I first met the Department staff at Open Day, they couldn’t have been more encouraging, with expertise in areas across the board. The Masters and PhD groups are really supportive of one another, and there’s a definite sense that you’re making a valued contribution to a flourishing academic and creative community, which is why I’m staying for my PhD.”

Morvern, PhD in Theatre, Film and Television
application of industry-standard techniques and tools including Final Cut Pro Studio for editing and Nuke. After Effects and Boujou for visual effects. In addition to creating their own projects (in both individual and group settings), students also work with raw production footage and support materials from two award-winning feature films. Guest sessions with industry personnel round out the learning experience by providing insight into current professional practice. Previous visitors have come from Aardman Animation, Double Negative, Framestore, Partizan and several other major companies.

Your background
You will be expected to have some existing knowledge of film, video or TV production. This may have been gained via a first degree in a related discipline or through professional practice.

MA in Theatre: Writing, Directing and Performance
This MA offers a unique combination of analytical and practical methods for the creative investigation of plays and performance texts. The programme focuses on the relationship between a writer’s script and performance outcomes on stage or screen. It ranges in scope from Elizabethan playwriting to contemporary film and TV scriptwriting, and is based on the premise that a writer’s work cannot be studied in isolation from the collaborators and institutions that helped to realise it. Masterclasses and seminars by professional theatre and film practitioners are an integral part of the programme – recent visitors include Penelope Wilton, Sam West, John Barton and David Edgar, and Max Stafford-Clark is Writing and Performance’s Visiting Professor. The programme deploys analytical, historical and practical elements, and students are expected to make practical investigations of existing texts where necessary, as well as, in some cases, creating their own scripts and texts.

The generosity of the Samuel Storey Trust has enabled the creation of an ambitious and swiftly growing Writing and Performance manuscript collection in the University Library, which includes the complete archives of the playwrights and screenwriters Charles Wood, David Storey, Julia Pascal and Peter Whelan. The collection holds multiple drafts, and related correspondence, for a number of important works, and these are brought into play in the teaching of the MA. The archive also houses a growing collection of manuscripts by leading comic scriptwriters such as Marks & Gran, who also lead workshops on various courses.

We aim to produce postgraduates with a sophisticated understanding of how plays work in performance, and to develop high-quality researchers and theatre practitioners who understand the practical dynamics of process and production. Assessments are a mixture of creative assignments and academic essays. Students may choose between a 20,000-word dissertation and an extended practical project which might be a playscript, a performance or a production.

Your background
The MA is unique in that it is designed to accommodate both students who may wish to pursue further academic study and students who want to go into the theatre or media industries. Applicants may have a range of academic backgrounds.

PhD research degrees
We encourage applications from students who wish to pursue research leading to the award of a PhD in any areas in which the Department has a research specialism – TFTV has PhD programmes by research and by creative practice. Brief summaries of areas in which members of staff are interested in supervising research students can be found in the staff list. Further details are available on individual staff web pages, which can be found at www.york.ac.uk/tftv/staff.

Your background
Normally, you will have a good Masters degree in a discipline related to the research area in which you intend to work.

Available funding
Home and EU students can apply for University funding and AHRC studentships. Overseas students may also apply for ORS awards.

Staff list

Professor and Head of Department

Andrew Higson, PhD (Kent)  
British cinema; silent cinema; national/transnational cinema; film and television history

Professors

Michael Corder, MA (Cambridge)  
Comic scriptwriting/performance; contemporary playwriting and production; early modern theatre

Mary Luckhurst, PhD (Cambridge)  
Directing and acting; contemporary political drama; dramaturgy; war, terror, documentary

Duncan Petrie, PhD (Edinburgh)  
British, Scottish and New Zealand cinema history; cinematography; Scottish culture; moving image policy and institutions

Senior Lecturers

Kristyn Barton, PhD (Edinburgh)  
Feminist film/TV criticism; emotion/effect; theonising desire on screen

David Hickman, BSc (Brunel)  
Film/TV production; documentary; writing and directing for TV

John Mateer, BFA (New York), American Film Institute Fellow  
Film/TV production, postproduction and business; visual effects; new media

Lecturers

Tom Cantrell, MA (York)  
Verbatim and documentary theatre; modern British political theatre; playwriting; acting theory and training; actor and the voice; television performance

Varsha Panjwani, PhD (York)  
English renaissance drama; theatre and performance history and editing

Sandra Pauletto, PhD (York)  
Audio technology-focused projects; sound design in multimodal contexts

Ben Poore, PhD (Royal Holloway)  
Contemporary playwriting; literary adaption; the Victorians on stage and screen

Patrick Tiley, BSc (Bath)  
TV production; children’s programmes; science programmes; ethics of production

Available funding
Home and EU students can apply for University funding and AHRC studentships. Overseas students may also apply for ORS awards.