

**Film Thesis Guidelines**  
**Film & Performing Arts BA**  
**Department of Theatre & Film**  
**University of Alaska Fairbanks**

All students proposing a "Senior Thesis" in film directing must be a film major in good standing and have completed either FLM/FLPA 331 Directing Film and Video  
OR FLM/FLPA 470 Advanced Film/Video Directing  
OR FLM/FLPA 480 Documentary Filmmaking  
OR FLM/FLPA 431 Advanced Film Production.

A semester of FLPA 498, Film Research, is also highly encouraged to prepare students for the Thesis work and provide time to begin screenplay revisions, breakdowns, and pre-production logistics.

Senior thesis project proposals will be evaluated by the Film UAF faculty on the basis of previously completed coursework, practical directing history, the merit of the written proposal, compatibility with departmental season goals and schedules, and the availability of support staff. Previous film directing experiences outside the department may also be considered in the evaluation and selection process.

The proposal for the senior thesis project in film directing should include the following elements:

- Complete Screenplay or Treatment (with production releases as necessary)
- Production Board or Breakdown including list of locations, cast, equipment, and budget.
- Brief synopsis of the plot, as well as a description of primary characters and themes found in the work;
- Concept and design statement relating to HOW you will produce this show within the parameters of the project guidelines;

For all senior thesis directing projects, the student must select a 15-page or less screenplay which can be effectively cast, designed, produced, and edited within a semester's time period. Each directing project will be presented for a public audience, free of charge. The Department has the authority to schedule the presentation dates and times to best fit time and space considerations.

Student directors may be awarded a minimal budget grant (as determined by the faculty and department chair). All purchases are to be approved by the faculty advisor prior to the purchase time. The Department is NOT responsible for any expenses accrued from the student film production, and any equipment purchases remain the property of The Department.

Student directors are responsible for coordinating and planning all aspects of the project, including acquisition of necessary actors, crew, designers, technical personnel, and publicists. The Theatre and Film Department does not guarantee access to workstudy or practicum students, or to departmental staff in the shop areas, although it is our intent to help you fully produce your realized production.

The final grade for the senior thesis will be assigned by the project advisor, and will be based on both process (50%) and the final product outcomes (50%). The remaining faculty members will provide the student director with written comments and reactions for their consideration.

### Production Notebook and Website

Student directors must carefully document ALL aspects of the production process (as indicated by the project advisor) and compile a professional production book or website at the completion of the project. This production “book” MUST include the following elements:

- finalized director’s concept/analysis statement (research when available)
- directors’ script with blocking and textual notation
- finalized production schedule
- All legal release forms, contracts, or permits necessary for film production
- Call Sheets for production
- production meeting agendas and reports
- marketing and publicity documents
- a final self-assessment of both the PROCESS and FINAL PRODUCT

Advisor Meetings: You are expected to set up and attend bi-weekly meetings with your thesis advisor to discuss your progress on the project. It is your responsibility to set up these meetings with your advisor, not the advisor’s responsibility to track you down.

Committee Creation: You are encouraged to create a Thesis Committee, which will serve to help evaluate your final film project. While only meetings with the advisor are mandatory, having one or two full committee meetings with your thesis committee may also prove helpful. A committee invitation can be extended to any member of the faculty, staff, or community. Committee members serve on a voluntary basis only.

Committee Feedback: You are encouraged to invite your thesis committee to review screenplay documents, rough cuts, and picture lock versions of your film. You are then encouraged to set up meetings with each faculty member for feedback.

Analysis: detailed written analysis of the screenplay, including style, character, structure, setting, storyline, and relationships. Be as detailed as possible about all the characters, themes, and concepts in the film.

Research: historical research or visual research or media viewed used for design or approach to content. Please provide a detailed bibliography of sources used and collected.

Detailed journal of rehearsal process and personal preparation outside of rehearsal done for the production. Journal should also include reflection on performances and a final self-assessment of your work.

### Thesis Defense

1. You will have a public thesis defense where you will give a presentation on your work on the role and written project. There will also be an opportunity for the audience to ask you questions publicly.
2. You will have a private thesis defense with the film faculty and/or thesis committee who will be able to ask you further specific questions about your process, choices, and written project.