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Grooms

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Letter From the Program Director

Tony Grooms



Lights! Camera! Action! More movies and TV shows were made in Georgia in 2018 than any other place on Earth. This new capital of movie making, also called “Yallywood,” has been made possible by Georgia’s continued commitment to significant tax breaks for filmmakers. Other state legislatures have offered tax breaks to Hollywood and created similar booms in filmmaking, only to find that the booms faltered because of a lack of infrastructure for the film industry. Smartly, the Georgia Board of Regents is supporting infrastructure with the creation of The Georgia Film Academy, tasked with training Georgians for jobs in the film industry. To date, the GFA has focused only on undergraduate and “below-the-line” (technical) training, but that is all about to change and the MAPW is leading the way.

This March, alone, thirty-eight films and TV shows are being produced in the state—but few of these are actually being written in the state. Screenwriters tend to live in California and New York where they have established writers’ rooms. But that is about to change as GFA moves its focus to “above-the-line training,” in particular, screenwriting. For nearly twenty years, MAPW has been the only program to offer face-to-face, graduate-level screenwriting courses in Georgia’s public institutions. In fact, the

GFA’s executive director and academic director, Jeff Stepakoff and Aaron Levy, formerly taught screenwriting in the MAPW, and still hold tenure in the program. Recently hired screenwriters Gabrielle Fulton and Mitch Olson are also making their marks on the MAPW’s screenwriting courses. Both, experienced in film and TV writers’ rooms, are offering writers’ room courses. Mitch’s course launches this Fall 2019. Courses in other screenwriting topics such as adaptation, the half-hour pilot, the hour drama, the documentary, and various other genres of TV and film writing are also being offered. Film history and film business courses are being planned as well.

There are two ways you can become a part of this exciting venture. You can take screenwriting courses as a part of the [MAPW degree program](#), or you can take them as a part of the [Creative Writing Certificate](#) program. Either way will prepare you for an exciting career in screenwriting.

Screenwriters are crucial to sustaining Georgia’s film industry. Without writers there could be no scripts. Without scripts, there can be no productions. And without productions, no jobs for actors, directors, film crews, location scouts and other workers. Screenwriters create jobs!