



MA SERIAL STORYTELLING

International Master's Programme
Application Details 2024/25



Internationale
Filmschule
Köln

The Master's programme »MA Serial Storytelling« guides young professionals in exploring, conquering, and expanding forms and methods of serial narration for TV and digital platforms. Accompanied by renowned series creators, script consultants, and media scholars, students analyse the secrets behind the success of popular series and develop their own innovative series concepts. Series dramaturgy, character development, and collaborative writing processes (»Writers' Room«) are at the centre of their practical work.

In addition to narrative and media-theoretical content, the programme conveys the basics of transnational markets and new media platforms, and it supports the students in exploring innovative narrative forms, work structures, and distribution channels. For their major writing assignments, students have the opportunity to write either in English or in German, focusing on international or German series markets respectively. The programme is supported by partners such as RTL, ZDF, Series Mania, SerienCamp, and the Film Festival Cologne.

www.serialstorytelling.com

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Academic Requirements

To obtain a Master's degree, applicants must have an undergraduate degree (Bachelor's degree or an equivalent degree) with a minimum of 180 ECTS credits or a higher degree (e.g. a German »Magister« or »Diplom«) from an accredited university. The ifs welcomes talented applicants who have received degrees in unrelated fields. In justified exceptional cases, applicants with exceptional artistic skills whose CVs lack one or more of these formal requirements may request to enroll in the programme as advanced training participants.

Work Experience

Applicants must have worked in the field of media production for at least one year.
(visit the FAQ section at www.serialstorytelling.com for more details)

Language Skills

Applicants need to provide proof of sufficient English language skills (B2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), e.g. by a TOEFL score of 72 points (internet-based) or equivalent test results. Native English speakers are exempted from this requirement. German language skills are only required for students in the German language track.

Screenwriting Skills

A solid understanding and command of the basics of screenwriting and dramaturgy in theory and practice is a prerequisite for this programme. This is assessed in the application process. If an applicant's knowledge and skills in this field prove to be yet insufficient at the time of selection, the applicant may be required to enroll in the ifs' »Summer School Screenwriting« (or in a comparable course) before the start of the Master's Programme (additional costs apply). In these cases, admission is pending until the missing proof has been provided.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

In order to apply, you are required to upload all material listed below as separate PDF files, **each marked with your surname** by **6 January 2025**.

Please note that incomplete applications will not be considered!

Forms

1. Tabular CV including work and training experience
2. A translated (German or English) copy of your degree certificate (scan)
3. A translated (German or English) copy of your examination certificate – alternatively translated (German or English) copies of your transcript of records and your diploma supplement (scan)
4. Proof of very good English language skills (level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)

Assignments

Please include your name and upload the following tasks in **one single PDF file**. Please use a header (»Task 1«, »Task 2«...) for each task.

Task 1

Write a short statement on why you are interested in participating in the MA Serial Storytelling. (*max. 1 p., English language*)

Task 2

Write a short essay:

- Which qualities do you consider to be quintessential for a screenwriter when working in a team?
- How do you see yourself in a highly collaborative environment when developing, plotting, and writing with other creatives is key?
- What do you think are your personal strengths and weaknesses in a collaborative story development process?
- What do you bring to the table?
- What do you expect to receive from your writing partners?
- Do you have any previous experiences with the professional and emotional aspects of giving and receiving feedback – of »killing your darlings« and »killing the darlings of other writers«? (*max. 2 pp. altogether, English language*)

Task 3

Indicate whether you are applying for the international track (where writing projects are submitted in English language aimed at an international market) or for the German language track (where writing projects are submitted in German language aiming at German language markets).

Task 4

Pick one of the series listed below:

- »Kleo« (Germany)
- »Push« (Germany)
- »Succession« (USA)
- »The Last of Us« (USA)
- »Sex Education« (GB)
- »Ghosts« (GB original or US adaptation)
- »D. P.« (South Korea)
- »Berlin« (Spain)
- »Borgen« (Season 4, Denmark)
- »Good Morning, Veronica« (Brazil)

Introduce one additional character for your chosen show, and describe this new character and his/her relations to the storyworld and the ensemble of the series (*max. 1 p.*) (*You will make use of this character in task 5.*)

Please use your preferred language stated above (task 3) for this exercise.

Task 5

Create three brief scenes of the show you selected in task 4, including two or more characters from the show plus the additional character you introduced in task 4.

In each scene one of your characters has a dilemma and must struggle to achieve a goal in the scene, against the resistance of one or more of the other characters.

Show how the characters strive to reach their individual goals, revealing something about their inner life and feelings through behaviour and dialogue. (*2–3 pp. for each scene*)

Please note that the three scenes don't necessarily have to be connected. However, they could be part of a causal and thematically connected chain of events.

Please use your preferred language stated above (task 3) for this exercise.

Task 6

Develop an idea for an original series. This short paper should include details on characters and character orchestration, main plot lines, format, genre, and audiences. Limit yourself to the first season. (*2–3 pp.*)

Please use your preferred language stated above (task 3) for this exercise.

Task 7

Answer the following questions about the series you presented in task 6: Why is this story best told in a serial format (and not in a feature film)? What is unique about your series? What are your reference points with regards to existing series? When you think about national or international TV or streaming broadcasters, where do you think your series would be best located and why? Why are you the ideal writer for this story? (*max. 1 p.*)

Please use your preferred language stated above (task 3) for this exercise.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

ENTRANCE EXAMS

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to an entrance exam in the **first week of February**. The exams will consist of interviews and writing tasks, and will take place online.

CONTACT

Carolin Große Hellmann

Head of Serial Storytelling /
Head of Professional Training Screenwriting /
Head of European Showrunner Programme
T +49 221 920188-261
serialstorytelling@filmschule.de

DATES

(subject to change)

Application deadline:

6 January 2025

Online info event:

27 November 2024, 5 pm CET,
<https://tinyurl.com/548787y3>
Password: SerInfo24

Announcement shortlist:

21 January 2025

Interviews:

4-6 February 2025

Start of programme:

September 2025

Duration:

2 years (4 semesters)

Residency:

15 weeks in semesters 1-3, 6 weeks in semester 4

Admission:

every other year

