

WELCOME

CLASS OF 2028



CINEMATOGRAPHY | DIRECTING | EDITING | PRODUCING
PRODUCTION DESIGN | SCREENWRITING

[AFI.edu](https://www.afionline.edu)

A photograph of a film set in a large, industrial-style studio. The scene is dimly lit, with several bright spotlights creating a hazy, atmospheric effect. In the foreground and middle ground, several people are silhouetted against the light, appearing to be working on equipment. A large window or screen in the background is brightly lit, casting a glow over the scene. The overall mood is one of focused activity in a creative environment.

The American Film Institute champions the future of the moving image as an art form.

We believe in the revolutionary power of visual storytelling to share diverse perspectives, inspire empathy and drive culture forward.

AFI CONSERVATORY

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE DEAN



Dear Future AFI Conservatory Fellow,

Welcome to the Class of 2028!

We did not make this decision lightly. The Discipline Heads, Faculty and Staff embarked on an exhaustive review of applicants — and this invitation to join AFI's Class of 2028 is not only based on your skill, your artistic potential and your drive, but also our belief you will bring your own point of view to the AFI Conservatory community, and this community of storytellers from around the world can in turn support you.

Yes — you may already be a Cinematographer, Director, Editor, Producer, Production Designer or Screenwriter. It's our goal to make you even better at your chosen discipline, and to welcome you into a new and broader community of filmmakers. The AFI Conservatory is an interdisciplinary program that promotes collaboration between the disciplines above all else, as well as with our faculty of professionals and your talented peers from many different cultural and work experiences from around the world. During your time here, we hope you will appreciate the teamwork imperative to bringing a creative vision to the screen — and that you will forge lasting friendships and partnerships that will contribute to your artistic journey.

You will practice the art of storytelling each and every day both in the classroom and in production. It starts with our Boot Camp and continues through your cycle films in the first year, and then into the second year with a thesis project. You will also contribute to your peers' projects, for there is as much to learn from supporting others as there is from leading a team.

You'll learn from the masters, watching films and participating in seminars with filmmakers discussing how they work and their inspirations. This past year, we welcomed such artists Akinola Davies Jr. (MY FATHER'S SHADOW), Chloé Zhao (HAMNET), Clint Bentley (TRAIN DREAMS), Dana Fox (WICKED, WICKED: FOR GOOD), Danny DeVito (HOT DOGS FOR GAUGUIN), Ed Lachman (MARIA), Erin Foster (NOBODY WANTS THIS), Eva Victor (SORRY, BABY), Greg Kwedar (TRAIN DREAMS), Guillermo del Toro (FRANKENSTEIN), James Mangold (A COMPLETE UNKNOWN), James Sweeney (TWINLESS), Jesse Eisenberg (A REAL PAIN), Kristen Stewart (THE CHRONOLOGY OF WATER), Kurt Ravenwood (HUNDREDS OF BEAVERS), Len Amato (BLOOD DIAMOND), Noah Baumbach (JAY KELLY), Nia DaCosta (HEDDA), Peter Berg (AMERICAN PRIMEVAL), Rian Johnson (WAKE UP DEAD MAN: A KNIVES OUT MYSTERY), Stephen Graham (ADOLESCENCE), Yorgos Lanthimos (BUGONIA), as well as AFI Conservatory Alumni Amy Vincent (AFI Class of 1991, SONG SUNG BLUE), Ari Aster (AFI Class of 2010, EDDINGTON), Brad Ingelsby (AFI Class of 2005, TASK), Charlie Polinger (AFI Class of 2017, THE PLAGUE), Deniese Davis (AFI Class of 2012, ONE OF THEM DAYS), Freddy Macdonald (AFI Class of 2021, SEW TORN), Justin Tipping (AFI Class of 2011, HIM)-just to name a few.

We are proud to welcome you to the AFI community and look forward to getting to know you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Ruskin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Sincerely,

Susan Ruskin

Dean, AFI Conservatory | Executive Vice President, American Film Institute

CLASS OF 2028 AT A GLANCE

Each year, we admit a mix of Cinematography, Directing, Editing, Production Design, Producing and Screenwriting Fellows. As one in an exclusive group of filmmakers, you will encounter a dynamic blend of perspectives that will contribute to your creative process and strengthen your narrative filmmaking skills. The information included in this packet includes important dates, as well as what to expect during your first year.

IMPORTANT DATES

Admitted Fellows Information Session

March 28, 2026

(Zoom link will be sent separately)

Priority Deadline for Financial Aid

April 15, 2026

If you have not submitted your FAFSA form, please do so immediately. The AFI Conservatory code for FAFSA is G22220.

Admissions Requirements Checklist

Date in Acceptance Letter

Forms, Information and Deposit Due

Planning your Finances Information Session

May 2026 - TBD

(Zoom link will be sent separately)

Fellow Affairs Information Packet Available

June 2026

International Fellows Financial Verification Forms Due

June 1, 2026

Tuition Due for Fall Semester

July 1, 2026

New Fellow Orientation - In Person on AFI Campus

August 20-21, 2026

First Day of Classes

August 24, 2026

SEAT DEPOSIT AND INTENT TO ENROLL FORM

Please see the [Admissions Requirements Checklist](#) for details on what is required to reserve your seat.

Out of consideration to the aspiring fellow filmmakers joining our program and in recognition of the fact that you have been offered one of 24 seats in your discipline, please let us know if you plan on accepting your offer to attend the AFI Conservatory sooner rather than later. Due to the limited number of seats offered in each discipline, this allows us to move swiftly to fill any remaining seats. The Enrollment Decision form, Seat Deposit and Enrollment Agreement are all required in order to reserve your place in the Class of 2028.



ACADEMIC CALENDAR 2026-27

FALL TERM TUITION DUE	July 1, 2026
FALL TERM 2026	August 24–December 11, 2026
ORIENTATION	August 20-21 2026
FIRST DAY OF CLASSES	August 24, 2026

HOLIDAYS/NO CLASSES:

Labor Day	September 7, 2026
Thanksgiving Break	November 26–November 29, 2026
Winter Recess	December 12, 2026–January 10, 2027
(AFI RE-OPENS MONDAY, JANUARY 4, 2027)	

SPRING TERM TUITION DUE	December 1, 2026
SPRING TERM 2027	January 11–May 28, 2027
FIRST DAY OF CLASSES	January 11, 2027

HOLIDAYS/NO CLASSES:

Martin Luther King Jr. Day	January 18, 2027
Presidents' Day	February 15, 2027
Spring Recess	March 13–21, 2027

SUMMER TERM 2027	June 1–August 6, 2027
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FINANCING YOUR EDUCATION

The AFI Conservatory's Financial Aid Team supports admitted and current Fellows by providing information and resources to assist in financing their education at the Conservatory. There are many factors to consider when attending graduate school, including the financial investment you are making and how to prepare for it.

There are two main types of Financial Aid at the AFI Conservatory:

- 1. AFI Scholarships (domestic and international Fellows)**
- 2. Federal Student Loans (domestic Fellows only)**

FOR DOMESTIC FELLOWS – FEDERAL STUDENT LOANS

Federal student loans are the primary source of funding for AFI Fellows who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents. Applicants must complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) each year at fafsa.gov to be considered for a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan including a Master Promissory Note (MPN) and Loan Entrance Counseling. Please note the Federal Grad PLUS student loan program is being discontinued on July 1, 2026 and will not be available to incoming Fellows starting in fall 2026. Any Fellow interested in additional loans can explore options with private lenders. More information about private loans is [listed here](#).

International Fellows may be eligible for private educational loans in the U.S. with a U.S. co-signer. Resources for international Fellows are [listed here](#). You may also be eligible for third-party loan programs. [Listed here](#) are loan programs prior AFI Fellows have used.

SCHOLARSHIPS

A limited number of AFI Scholarships may also be available for qualifying domestic and international applicants who have completed the AFI Scholarship Application by the February 13, 2026 deadline. AFI Scholarships are applied toward AFI tuition charges only and they are generally renewable for the second year of the program.

Fellows are also encouraged to seek outside scholarship funding. A partial list of outside scholarship resources is available on [our website](#).

FINANCIAL AID DISBURSEMENT

All financial aid funds are divided into two disbursements: one at the start of classes for the fall term and the other at the start of classes for the spring term. Any financial aid funding in excess of tuition and fees for the term will be refunded to the student after the semester start and typically within 14 days after disbursement to the Fellow's AFI account. Fellows should be prepared to cover their initial living expenses, as refunds will not be available until at least the second week of classes each term.

MORE INFORMATION

More information about outside scholarships and financial aid can be found on our website [here](#). For any questions, please reach out to the Financial Aid team at FinancialAid@AFI.edu.

TUITION, FEES AND PAYMENTS

The Tuition Deadline for the Fall 2026 term is **July 1, 2026**. The Bursar will send an email notification in mid-May when your tuition statement is available to view in the student portal. Tuition payment must be received (not sent) by the tuition deadline. If you have any questions about payments and payment options, contact the Bursar at Bursar@AFI.edu. Tuition and fees may be paid by direct payment, financial aid, the tuition payment plan, or a combination of those options. For consideration as payment, the tuition payment plan and financial aid must be confirmed in advance of the tuition due date. For eligible fellows, payment plans must be requested and confirmed by June 1, 2026.

COST OF ATTENDANCE

	Academic Year 2026-27	Academic Year 2027-28**
TUITION	\$75,508*	\$78,151

*includes a \$1,000 nonrefundable deposit

In addition to the above totals, Fellows should budget for the following estimated expenses.

Living Expenses	\$19,750	\$19,750
Supplies Allowance	\$4,500	\$4,500
Transportation Allowance	\$2,700	\$2,700
Misc./Personal Expense/Loan Fees	\$6,222	\$6,222
ESTIMATED TOTAL COST OF ATTENDANCE	\$108,680	\$111,323

The AFI Conservatory curriculum is designed with the intention that Fellows will complete their requirements and graduate within two years, although completing a thesis project may extend enrollment for an extra semester. An Enrollment Continuation Fee (TBD) may be charged to a Fellow's account after their fourth enrolled semester.

**NOTE: The tuition amounts listed above are dependent upon annual review and approval by the AFI Board of Trustees and are subject to change.



CAREER READINESS PROGRAM

The AFI Conservatory prepares Fellows for dynamic careers in the film industry across its six disciplines. Fellows translate classroom learning and production experience into meaningful professional engagement through externships, structured internships, and curated industry opportunities. Through the Career Readiness Program, Fellows gain access to internships as early as the summer of their first year, build professional networks to secure additional opportunities in their second year, and receive intensive career development support as emerging alumni. While participation in externships and internships is optional, elective credit is available for qualifying opportunities.

BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE

AFI Conservatory Career Services in the Lawrence Herbert Alumni Center offers a pathway to success through continuing education, connections and support. The Center provides recent AFI Alumni with personalized career guidance, valuable industry connections and practical resources to navigate and succeed in an ever-changing media landscape. Through showcases, workshops, networking events and career development sessions, Bridge to the Future supports Alumni in achieving their professional goals.

MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS

Fellows have the extraordinary opportunity to participate in different forms of mentorship at the AFI Conservatory. First-year Fellows are matched with second-year Fellows, who provide peer advice. In each discipline, Fellows also have the chance to receive mentorship from a member of our Faculty. During the first-year cycle films and second-year thesis films, Fellows receive mentorship from professional staff members and production coordinators. New Alumni may participate in the Alumni Mentor program, which helps you build your professional network with seasoned professionals.



During a seminar on the AFI Campus, writer/Director Todd Field (AFI Class of 1992) talks to AFI Conservatory Fellows about his acclaimed film *TÁR*.

ALUMNI NEWS

For over 55 years, the AFI Conservatory's reputation has been built by and reflected in the excellence of AFI's Alumni – and AFI continues to support Alumni through the recently established Lawrence Herbert Alumni Center, which provides career development resources, engages AFI's powerful network of mentors to support Alumni and champions the global accomplishments of the Conservatory's Alumni. [Learn more.](#)

Over the last several years, graduates have received accolades for their work completed at AFI, including historic wins at the Student Academy Awards®, as well as recognition at the College Television Awards and annual DGA Student Awards. AFI Alumni continue to be recognized by their peers throughout their careers and, in the past five years, have received 18 Academy Award® nominations and two wins, including an Honorary Oscar® for David Lynch, and 168 Emmy® nominations and 48 wins.

AFI Alumni credits abound on many of our favorite films and TV series including recently acclaimed works such ALL THAT WE LOVE, BOB TREVINO LIKES IT, BUGONIA, CAUGHT STEALING, COYOTES, DEPT Q., ECHO VALLEY, EMILY IN PARIS, ELLA MCCAY, FALLOUT, GODFATHER OF HARLEM, HAMET, HAL & HARPER, HOLLAND, THE ACCOUNTANT 2, I LOVE LA, I'M STILL HERE, IS THIS THING ON?, KARATE KID: LEGENDS, KILL BILL: THE WHOLE BLOODY AFFAIR, LILO & STITCH, LONE SAMURAI, MONSTER: THE ED GEIN STORY, NINE PERFECT STRANGERS, NCIS: TONY & ZIVA, ONE BATTLE AFTER ANOTHER, PLURIBUS, PLATONIC, SINNERS, THE LAST RODEO, SPRINGSTEEN: DELIVER ME FROM NOWHERE, STRANGER THINGS, THE GIRLFRIEND, THE HOUSEMAID, THE LAST OF US, THE LUCKIEST MAN IN AMERICA, THE MORNING SHOW, THE ROAD, THE SUMMER I TURNED PRETTY, THE TERMINAL LIST: DARK WOLF, TRON: ERES and more.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

We hope you learned about the AFI Conservatory curriculum and program during your time as an applicant. The packet provided for your interview answered many questions prospective Fellows have about the AFI Conservatory including curriculum, financial aid and production.

Now that you are an admitted Fellow, here are some additional frequently asked questions and answers that you may find helpful.

Q: I've been admitted to two disciplines. What happens now?

A: Congratulations – what an amazing choice you have! The AFI Conservatory only allows enrollment in one discipline. We encourage you to speak to a Faculty member and if possible, a member of our Alumni community to help you determine which discipline to enroll in.

Q: Does the AFI Conservatory offer deferrals?

A: The AFI Conservatory selects a small cohort of Fellows each year. Because of the small class size and the customization of each cohort's composition, we do not offer deferrals.

Q: Can I switch disciplines once I enroll at the AFI Conservatory?

A: The AFI Conservatory only admits a small cohort of Fellows to each discipline through a rigorous admissions process. Each admitted Fellow is carefully selected from the group of applicants in that given admissions cycle. As such, we do not allow anyone to switch disciplines once enrolled.

Q: Does AFI help with housing?

A: AFI does not provide housing, but we do provide information about housing to incoming Fellows in a second information packet. This includes information about the local neighborhoods surrounding the AFI Campus, places to search for apartment listings, and what to expect when renting an apartment and living in Los Angeles. You can also visit AFI's [housing web page](#) for more information.

Q: If I decide to attend, what kind of summer preparation is there?

A: Several information packets will be sent to incoming Fellows that include important dates (orientation, tuition deadline, I-20 paperwork for international Fellows, etc.) and information about discipline specific tools and software needs to be purchased before the start of classes. Recommended viewing and reading lists will be provided to prepare for the AFI curriculum. In some circumstances, your Discipline Head may recommend pursuing specific technical training prior to starting your program at AFI. If so, your Discipline Head or the Admissions Office will be in communication with you regarding those recommendations.

AFI CONSERVATORY CONTACTS

ADMISSIONS

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FINANCIAL AID

AFI employs a third-party Financial Aid team to process financial aid applications and provide guidance to Fellows.

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BURSAR



Norma Bengoechea

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FELLOW AFFAIRS AND ALUMNI AFFAIRS

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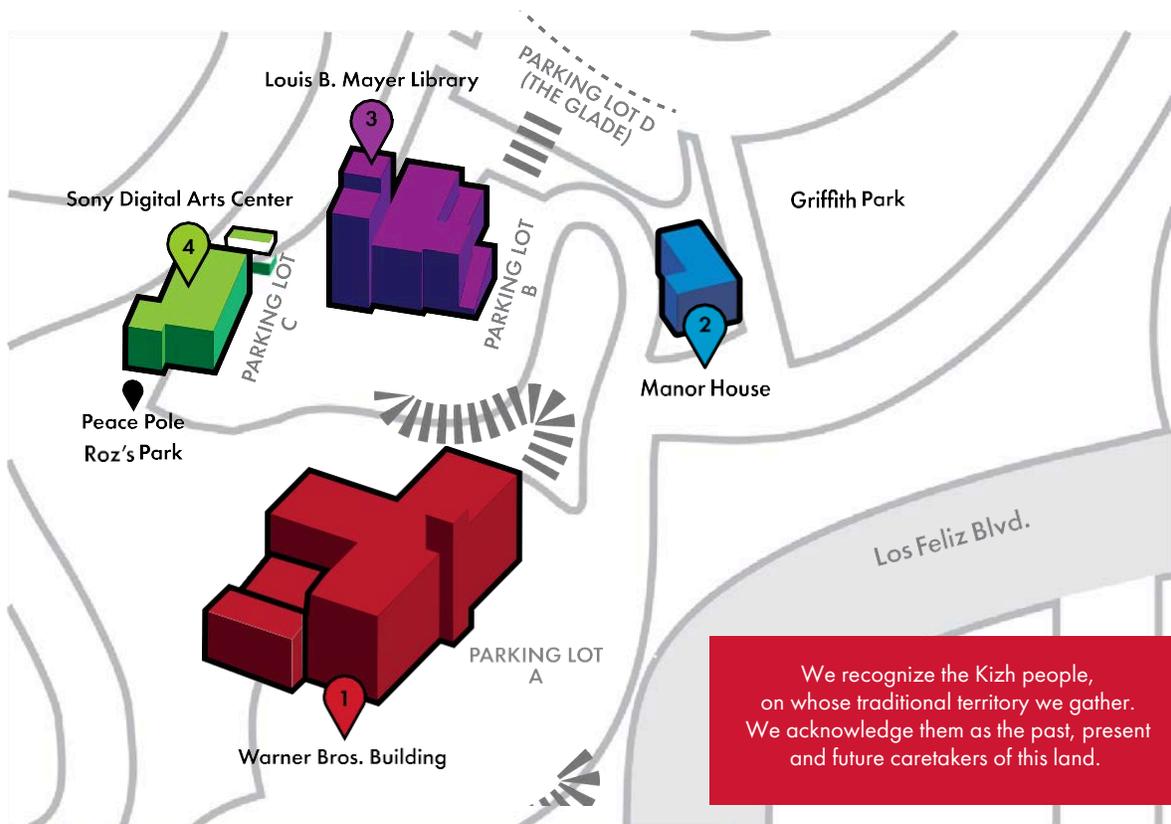
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AFI CONSERVATORY CAMPUS MAP



CAMPUS TOURS

We would love for you to visit us and see the AFI Campus for yourself. Campus tours are offered on Thursday mornings at 10:00 a.m. To RSVP for a tour, please visit the [AFI Campus Tours](#) page on our website.

CLASS VISITS

Due to the intimate nature of the Conservatory program, classes and workshops may not be available to observe. If you are interested in observing a class, please reach out to the Admissions Office directly so we can advise you on what classes are available to attend.

DIRECTIONS TO THE AFI CAMPUS

The AFI Campus is located in the Hollywood Hills overlooking Los Angeles. The campus is easily accessible from I-5, the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) and Burbank Airport (BUR), as well as from all Valley locations and Orange County. Our address is [2021 North Western Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90027](#).

HOURS AND PARKING

The AFI Campus is open from 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. daily. [Learn more](#) about visiting our campus.

Parking is free but limited, especially during peak usage times. We recommend that you use the parking lot behind the Louis B. Mayer Library Building.



Your best work
starts here.

 **AFI** CONSERVATORY

2021 North Western Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90027
AFI.edu

