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Scriptwriting course at FTII to be extended to three years

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Pune: The course on scriptwriting, the only year-long full-time, non-subsidised course at the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), will be converted into three-year, subsidised course, like the other courses at the institute, from 2013.

"With rising demand in terms of annual applications, this course, too, shall be turned into a three-year course. We will include a foundation year and invite more industry professionals to mentor the students. Once this becomes a three-year course, it will automatically go into the subsidised category," said course coordinator and renowned scriptwriter Anjum Rajabali.



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Since its inception in 2004, the course has had seven batches, with total 84 students. "The course seems to have acquired acceptance and appeal with every passing year: In 2004, we had 48 applicants for 12 seats. Last year, the number was 175. Interest in learning this craft has been increasing rapidly and this is heartening. We need more tal-

ent from different parts of India to come into this profession. Since the course is not run by career teachers, so to say, we also learn as we gather more experience and insights in our work and it finds its way into our teaching methods," Rajabali said.

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ing, films like *Shaitan*, *Rock On*, *Mi Shivajiraje Bhosale Boltoy*, *De Dhakka*, *Taryanche Bait* and several television shows and serials. "Many more are already in the pipeline," Rajabali said.

On the proposed upgradation, DJ Narain, director of the institute, said, "The syllabus review committee would deliberate on fine-tuning the content for all existing courses and the idea is also to introduce a foundation semester for each full-time course at FTII."

As a result, 2012-13 will be the last year of the one-year screenplay writing course, Rajabali said. "Having a foundation year for every specialisation is undoubtedly a very desirable, if not essential,

idea. On the other hand, it is also true that many aspirants may not be able to devote three years to a screenwriting course. They will now have to learn on their own or seek other means to help them. We will be including two bigger assignments for them, like writing an adapted screenplay. Being the head of screenplay writing, I have to oversee the syllabus revision as well as every other aspect of the course."

While designing the course eight years ago, Rajabali had undertaken a rather rigorous process taking inputs from colleagues in the profession. "I think the basic approach and content was pretty substantial and relevant. That hasn't changed sig-

nificantly. However, the syllabus, especially the reference material, is updated regularly. Moreover, we bring in a lot of guest lecturers from the profession and their updated experience serves as invaluable inputs for learning," he said.

More importantly, the students' protests at the FTII against the institute's privatisation raised the issue of subsidised as well as non-subsidised courses becoming costlier. "But the screenplay writing course, even with its non-subsidised economics, began with a tuition fee of Rs 50,000, which went up to Rs 85,000 in the last couple of years. By no yardstick can anyone term this costly or unaffordable," Rajabali said.