

Program Guidelines for Matriculated Students MASTER OF FINE ARTS PROGRAM

Department of Film and Media Arts
A graduate degree program in the
School of Communications and Theater
Temple University
Philadelphia, PA 19122
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To view online information about the program:

<http://www.temple.edu/fma> follow the MFA links

To view the online Graduate Bulletin:

<http://mdev.temple.edu/gradschool/bulletin.asp>

Program Mission:

The mission of the MFA program in the Department of Film and Media Arts is to encourage and develop film and media makers who may choose to pursue careers in independent media, the entertainment industry, or the academic and media communities. The program encourages work that is aesthetically challenging and socially conscious and seeks to explore the blurring boundaries between documentary, fiction, and experimental approaches. The program is dedicated to developing media artists seeking to express a personal voice through their work.

Length and Rigor of the Program:

The MFA in Film and Media Arts at Temple is a terminal degree comparable to a Ph.D. The MFA at Temple stresses a creative synthesis of theory and practice and culminates with a creative media project instead of a dissertation. It is intended to be a

three year program comprised of approximately two years of concentrated study and the final year for comprehensive exams and completion of the MFA thesis project.

Facilities:

The facilities available in the School of Communications and Theater include 3 television studios, computer and new media labs, sound studios, and digital post-production facilities. Equipment available for student use includes digital video cameras, 16mm and Super 16mm film cameras, lighting and grip equipment, and audio recording equipment. The School of Communications and Theater houses its own 16mm black and white processing laboratory and work is underway on a state-of-the-art broadcast and performance space located on Temple's main campus with access by SCAT/FMA students and faculty.

Transfer credits from other graduate programs

The MFA Committee may accept up to 11 credits of graduate course work completed at other universities or programs, provided the courses were related to the FMA curriculum and the student received a 'B' grade or higher. The student requesting transfer credit must petition the MFA Committee and provide official transcripts and catalog descriptions of the courses they wish to have reviewed. This request must also be accompanied by a Transfer Credit form available in AH 344. This credit hour requirement also applies to matriculated students who wish to do coursework at other universities or programs.

Financial Aid

Various forms of financial aid are available to students admitted into the MFA program.

Adjunct/ Part time teaching- open to students at any point in their program of study. Students on fellowship or full graduate assistantship are not eligible for Adjunct/ Part time teaching. Students interested in being considered for an Adjunct/ Part time teaching position should submit a cover letter and resume to the FMA departmental Chair. Call the FMA departmental office at 215-204-3859 for contact information and a mailing address.

Graduate Assistantships- generally available to second year students. Awarded in the spring of the first year for the following academic year, this assistantship comes in the form of a Research Assistantship or a Teaching Assistantship and carries a monthly stipend and tuition remission. Full time RA/TA's must provide 20 hours of work per week to the University during a period from one week prior to the first day of fall classes through May Commencement in the spring. In addition to the regular Financial Aid application form, a separate RA/TA Assistantship form is required for application. This form is available in the Office of the Dean, Room 344 and should be submitted to the FMA Graduate Director by March 15. Students applying for an RA/TA position must have a 3.5 GPA or higher. RA/TA awards and positions are determined by the MFA Committee, usually by June for the following fall semester and finalized by July. Applicants may be eligible for an assistantship in another department (depending on

the individual's background and experience in other fields). Contact that department directly for information on possible graduate assistantships.

A Note on teaching in the Department of Film and Media Arts:

All graduate students teaching in the FMA department are required to conduct student evaluations of their performance using the teaching evaluations available in the FMA office. If a graduate student TA or adjunct is found to have received less than satisfactory teaching evaluations that student will meet with an FMA faculty teaching review committee for guidance, suggestions, and monitoring. If the same student receives less than satisfactory evaluations a second time s/he will no longer be eligible to teach in the Department of Film and Media Arts.

Other forms of support:

Project Completion Grants- There are two types of completion grants available for students finishing projects.

The University Completion Grant is highly competitive, awarded by the University Graduate School, and available for the completion of thesis projects. Students will be reviewed and nominated by the FMA department. Recipients receive a cash stipend and tuition remission.

The FMA Departmental Completion Grant is available to students finishing both thesis and non-thesis projects. The grant is based on budgetary needs but does not usually exceed \$1000 for non-thesis projects and \$2000 for thesis projects.

Loans and Federal Work-Study programs are available under various governmental and University programs. Information and applications are available from the University's Office of Financial Aid.

Note: Matriculated enrollment on a full-time basis is required during the period of any grant, assistantship, or fellowship.

Administration and Advising

The Graduate Director is selected by FMA faculty and serves a term of two years. The MFA Committee is comprised of full-time graduate faculty of the Department of Film and Media Arts. The MFA Committee conducts reviews of student work, monitors progress towards degree, and facilitates other matters relating to the student's program of study.

Upon being admitted to the program, the student is assigned an advisor. Thereafter, the student may elect to work with another advisor selected from the graduate faculty of the Department. Choosing an advisor does not preclude the seeking of academic or personal assistance from any other member of the FMA faculty or from the Graduate Director. It is expected that most advising matters can be handled by the student using

this document, the Graduate School Bulletin, and each semester's Schedule of Classes.

Students may petition the MFA Committee at any time concerning policies, requirements, and program-related requests. To do this the student drafts and submits a letter to the Graduate Director one week prior to the next MFA Committee meeting. The petition will then be discussed and decisions made at that meeting.

Degree Requirements

- A recommended program would include the completion of 42 credit hours of course work within two years, and completion of the comprehensive examination and thesis project within the third year for a total of 54 credit hours.

Required Courses to be completed during the first two years in the program:

- Cinematography
- Videography
- Media Writing
- History/Theory/Criticism seminar
- MFA Colloquium- one credit course taken twice. Entering students are required to take MFA Colloquium during their first fall semester and at least one other time during their course of study.

Required Courses to be completed during the fall semester of the third year:

- *Critical Methods (2 credit hours), for prep/completion of the Comprehensive Exams.
- **Advanced Problems (4 credit hours), for preparation of the MFA Thesis Proposal

*NOTE: Each student is required to complete a comprehensive exam, designed in conjunction with the individual's Comprehensive Exam committee and administered during the final weeks of Critical Methods. Students must have completed 42 credit hours before taking the Comprehensive Exams.

**NOTE: Each student is required to complete a major creative project as a culmination of the degree program. This MFA Thesis project may take many forms and the development of the project will be done in conjunction with a Thesis Committee.

Advanced Problems is a course designed to help students conceive new projects or finish current projects and can be taken twice during a student's tenure in the program. Students may take Advanced Problems once during their first two years in the program but all students are required to take Advanced Problems in the fall semester of their third year to design and complete their MFA Thesis Proposal. Advanced Problems is the only FMA course that may be taken more than once during a student's tenure in the program.

Additional Degree Requirements information:

- Course work at Temple is expected to be at or above the 400-level. Under compelling circumstances, students may petition to take a 300 level course for graduate credit but *the graduate tuition rate will apply*. No more than 12 hours of 300 level credit will count toward the MFA degree.
- Although it is expected that course work will primarily be done within the FMA Department, students may take up to 12 hours of grad course credit outside the department's program. The procedure to have other Temple graduate classes count toward the MFA degree is for the student to petition his/her advisor to take a graduate level course in another Temple program. This petition should be made the semester prior to taking the course. If the advisor agrees, the student may register

for the class. If the advisor does not agree, the student may petition the MFA Committee to review the request.

- Students may only take up to 8 hours of independent study towards their 42 hours of required course work. It is suggested that students use these independent hours wisely, for example, during summer to make up for a lighter credit load taken during the regular academic semesters or to propose projects not available through regular curriculum offerings.
- Incompletes: Students receiving an incomplete for a course must rectify this during the following semester. Any incomplete on the books longer than one academic year will become a Permanent Incomplete and the student will be required to repeat the course for an awarded grade.

Annual Review Process

The FMA Department will conduct annual reviews of graduate student progress to insure students are producing satisfactory work and are on schedule for graduation.

First Year Review:

The FMA Department requires a review of all first year graduate students during the middle of their second semester in the program (usually mid March to early April). Each student will be assigned a timeslot during which they will present current work, receive faculty feedback, and share their thoughts on the program.

Second Year Review:

The FMA Department utilizes a two part second year review process.

Part I takes the form of a required advising session with the student's assigned advisor where course requirements and total credit hours are reviewed. The intent of this advising session is to check on academic standing and to keep students on track to finish course work by the end of their second full year in the program. This review takes place late November/early December of the student's second year in the program. Part II of the second year review process takes the form of a public screening of work the student has completed during his/her second year of study. This screening will take place late April/early May of the student's second year in the program.

Comps and Thesis Committee Forms:

Anyone forming a Comps or Thesis committee is required to use the departmental form (available on the Grad Director office door, 13 alcove). This form is utilized to insure that all committee members have agreed to serve on particular committees and will also serve as the filed document indicating the final committee decision concerning Comps or Thesis. Collect the signatures and email addresses of your three committee members and then return the form to the Graduate Director. Your committee chair will request this form for the final committee meeting where all three members will sign off

on your Comps or Thesis using this form. It will then be returned to the Graduate Director as part of your file.

Guidelines for Comprehensive Exams

Goals of the Comprehensive Exams:

The Comprehensive Exam process seeks to investigate/reveal the following issues:

- Pedagogical investigation- Questions may deal with issues of pedagogy associated with media production and studies. These types of questions could include an annotated syllabus in their answers.
- Questions investigating Theoretical/Critical/Historical issues pertinent to the discipline and informed by practice. These questions may later be developed into a conference presentation or an article for publication.
- Some proposed questions should directly reference the student's creative work and should demonstrate the students' ability to theorize about their own work.

The Comprehensive Exams Committee:

The student will form a committee comprised of three FMA faculty members who will consult with the student throughout the Comprehensive Exams process. To better facilitate the process, the student will ask one of the committee members to act as the chair of the committee.

Comprehensive Exams procedure:

The Comprehensive Exams will be administered in the following manner:

- In the fall of the third year in the program the student will register for Critical Methods, a two-credit course, where s/he will prepare 8 questions in conjunction with Comps committee members. By midterm the 8 questions will have been researched and finalized at which point the committee will choose the 3 questions they wish the student to address and the student will choose the 4th. The student will use the following 6 weeks to complete research on these 4 questions.

Form of Final Exams:

- One week prior to finals week a day will be chosen on which the student may begin writing the Comps Exam. Beginning on this date, the student will have 3 days within which to write the comps and following the third day, will submit the final writing to his/her Comprehensive Exams committee members. Each answer to the four chosen questions should be 7-10 pages in length. It is not necessary to footnote all references though a bibliography should be included where appropriate.
- Once submitted for review, the Committee will have until the end of finals week to review the exam. If the committee agrees that the student has satisfactorily completed the exam, a grade will be recorded for successful completion of Critical Methods. If the work is found to be unsatisfactory, an NR grade will be recorded and the student will work with his/her committee to rectify the situation.

NOTE: Production work on the MFA Thesis project may not begin until the student has successfully passed the Comprehensive Exam.

Guidelines for completion of the Thesis process:Goals of the MFA Thesis Project:

The MFA Thesis Project serves as the culminating creative project of the MFA program and should demonstrate the student's technical and aesthetic development while in the program. Students must have completed the required 42 credits of course work before beginning work on the MFA Thesis proposal.

Thesis Project procedure:

- In the fall of the third year in the program the student will register for Advanced Problems, a four-credit course, where s/he will prepare a MFA Thesis proposal in conjunction with his/her MFA Thesis Committee. The MFA Thesis Committee will be comprised of 3 FMA faculty or 2 FMA faculty and one outside committee member of the student's choice. The formation of the Committee will be formalized by submitting the Thesis form to the Graduate Director containing the names and email addresses of the student's thesis committee. Note: Any outside committee member will need to be accepted by the MFA Committee so if a student wishes to have an outside committee member, the student is required to petition the MFA Committee in advance of forming his/her thesis committee.
- During the fall semester the student works with the Advanced Problems class and meets with his/her thesis committee on an ongoing basis to discuss the thesis project and to develop a proposal.
- One week prior to finals week the student submits the formal proposal to his/her thesis committee containing a project description, complete budget, detailed timeline, and script/expanded description for the thesis project. Once submitted for review, the Committee will have until the end of finals week to review the proposal. If the committee agrees that the student has proposed a viable Thesis Project, a grade will be recorded for successful completion of Advanced Problems. If the proposal is found to be unsatisfactory, an NR grade will be recorded and the student will work with his/her committee to rectify the situation.

Spring Semester of the third year:

- Once the MFA Thesis proposal has been passed by the students committee, the Student may begin work on the thesis project. The student will meet with committee members for regular progress reports/critiques. (A timeline for committee meetings is highly suggested to insure committee members will be available and progress on the project will be maintained.) It is expected that the student will finish his/her thesis project by May or August of the third year.
- On an agreed upon date the Student will submit the 'finished' thesis project to his/her committee members for final review. This submission must be done 2 weeks prior to the end of the semester in order to give the committee members time to review the work and submit their formal recommendation to the Department. If the project passes, the student will be recommended for graduation. If the project does not pass, the student's graduation will be postponed and a departmental decision on the matter will be forthcoming. The thesis project is successfully completed once the 3 committee members have signed off on the Thesis form and it is filed in the Grad Director's office.

- Final drop of thesis project: Once the thesis committee passes the project, the Student must deposit with the Graduate Director the following materials: In the case of a film or video production the student submits a production notebook, a Beta or DV copy of final project, and a VHS copy of the final project. In the case of a script, the student submits a production notebook and the final script. In case of new media or other harder to categorize projects, the student will work with his/her thesis committee, in conjunction with the MFA Committee, to determine the appropriate materials. Once these materials are deposited with the Graduate Director, the graduation form will be signed and submitted.

A note on the Production Notebook-students completing an MFA Thesis project, regardless of format, must also complete a production notebook. This 'notebook' can take many forms but serves as a record of the work involved in completing the thesis project. It would behoove the student to discuss the production notebook with his/her thesis committee prior to beginning work on the proposal as the notebook will reflect work beginning at this earliest stage of project development through project completion.

Suggested formats for the production notebook include:

Film or Video Projects:

The production notebook will be a detailed account of all aspects of production from the pre-production stage through the final project drop. The information in the production notebook could include such elements as research completed, location scouting, notes on the writing process, production shoots, editing schedules, etc. The form of the notebook will vary from project to project as the work done for a documentary or experimental piece may differ greatly from work completed for a narrative project.

A production notebook for film or video projects should include:

- Project description/treatment, list of crew/collaborators, complete project timeline, complete budget, various script versions/revisions, expanded project descriptions, casting/location scouting/research (if appropriate). The actual content of the notebook will be dependent upon the type of MFA project (narrative, non-narrative, etc.). The notebook should be organized with a Table of Contents and may make use of Appendices where appropriate.

Feature Length Screenplays:

Students whose thesis project is a screenplay should submit, along with the final copy of the screenplay, a portfolio of project-related material, which could include the items listed below. The material generated during the development process will be different for scripts that require research, or scripts that depend primarily on introspection and processing autobiographical materials, and for script which the writers are planning to produce themselves, and for scripts which the writers plan to market. Therefore students should discuss with their committee, the sorts of material that would be appropriate to include with the script.

Some possible production notebook formats for screenplays include:

- A logline, brief synopsis, and longer treatment of the screenplay. These materials might have been developed as part of the writing process, or might have been produced after the script is complete. They could be useful in writing grant proposals in sending out queries, or otherwise trying to market or produce the script.
- A proposal, or statement of purpose, which might be personal and autobiographical, or which might be analytical and scholarly, and which addresses the historical, thematic, structural, theoretical, or other issues or particular concern to the writer.
- A journal composed simultaneously with the project development, or an after-the-fact account of the writer's research and development process.
- Storyboards, production design materials, or other production plans.

New Media projects:

The production notebook for a new media project should include:

I. CONCEPTUAL OUTLINE

Detail the broader concepts of new media you are working with: digital imaging, telecommunications, database, hypertext, virtuality, interactivity, networks, self-generating systems, etc. Discuss the relationship between your concept and the media format you are working with, as regards meaning, form and reception.

II. PRODUCTION PROCESS

Technical Specifications

- applications utilized in the production
- new software/hardware applications you will be working with to master in this process
- describe the technical challenges anticipated and document the process/solutions arrived at supply a technical diagram (if relevant)

Research information

- cite the source texts that will be used: technical, theoretical, etc.
- document reference sources on the WWW (if relevant to your project)
- cite relevant works by other artists, designers, producers

Project Development

- supply a production timeline
- detail the role of each participant
- discuss your role in the project
- documentation of useability studies and the incorporation of user
- feedback in the interaction design process (if relevant)
- identify media resources and production process

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

What is the theoretical nature of the project and the rationale for its digital and/or online form? Discuss the contemporary and historical thought that is informing this

work, citing references and integrating these ideas into your own personal framework.

IV. DOCUMENTATION

The completed project must be accompanied by some form of documentation media: URL, CD-Rom and/or DVD-Rom. The Production Notebook must include print outs of essential aspects of the production, as detailed above.

Final Exhibition of the MFA Thesis Project

- As part of the graduation process, the MFA Thesis project will be screened/exhibited at a public event organized by the FMA Department.

NOTE: While the student retains copyright and ownership of the MFA Thesis Project and all other projects produced for class credit, Temple University should be appropriately credited in the Project's credits. The FMA Department retains the right to dub or exhibit its copy of projects for public, promotional, and educational purposes.

Time to Degree

The MFA program is designed as a three year graduate program. The Graduate School will allow no longer than 5 years to complete the MFA program. Once a student is accepted and matriculated into the program the 5 year time limit begins. Any leaves a student takes during the 5 years will count as time toward the degree. Students will not be given an extension of this 5 year limit simply because they took a leave of absence. While it is possible to petition the MFA Committee to request an extension of time, such an extension is rarely granted and only under extreme extenuating circumstances.

Additional Program Regulations

- Students are responsible for providing current mailing addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses to the FMA Graduate Director and the Dean's Office of Graduate Affairs. The student is also responsible for initiating corrections to his or her official records, through the appropriate faculty channels, if errors are noted on his/her transcript.
- University policy requires continuous enrollment, for at least one semester hour each fall and spring semester, unless an official leave has been granted by the MFA Committee and the Graduate School in advance of the leave.
- The Graduate School regulations state that a student "may request a leave of absence for a period not to exceed one year". Such leaves must be petitioned by the student in a letter to the MFA Committee. If the leave is approved, the University requires the payment of a Maintenance of Records fee during each semester of the leave period. Reminder: The five year limit for completion of the MFA degree includes time accumulated during leaves of absence.

- All students must maintain "satisfactory progress" toward the degree. Beginning with the first course credited towards the degree and continuing through all subsequent coursework, more than one grade of "F" or more than two grades below "B-" will result in dismissal from the program. Such factors as multiple permanent incompletes, an excessive period of inactivity without an approved leave of absence, failure to maintain continuous enrollment, overall unsatisfactory course performance, and most importantly, a low standard of creative work may also affect the status of an MFA candidate in the program. The MFA Committee may evaluate a student's performance at any time and dismiss students as it sees fit.
- Students must take the Comprehensive Exams in the semester following the completion their 42 credit hours or not later than one year beyond that date.
- Graduate School regulations require that all graduate students must have at least a 3.0 GPA at graduation.
- Fulltime status is considered to be at least 9 credit hours per semester; at least 6 credit per semester for students holding full graduate assistantships; or at least one credit per semester (for up to four semesters) for students registered for MFA Project credit (a filed code 23 may be required- check with the Office of the Dean, Room 344).

Graduation

During the final semester a student is enrolled in the program, s/he must file for graduation. The Graduation Application is available in the SCAT Graduate Office, Room 344 Annenberg Hall. While the exact date for filing varies slightly with each academic year, in general, deadline for application for January graduation is mid-October, deadline for application for May graduation is mid-February, and deadline for August graduation is the first week in June. For exact filing dates check the Temple University website (www.temple.edu), choose Academic Calendar, and check the appropriate semester.

Final Note

The Student is responsible for knowledge of current applicable regulations of the Graduate School and the MFA Program as well as SCAT and departmental policies as stated in the Graduate School Bulletin and other documents (including updates of this document). It is suggested that the student regularly check with the Office of the Dean, the Graduate School, and the FMA Graduate Director to make certain that they have received all pertinent updates/documents.