

DEPARTMENT OF DESIGN
M.F.A. Program in Digital Animation and Interactive Media
The Ohio State University

CURRICULUM

The program leading to the Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) in Digital Animation and Interactive Media is designed for students intending to work as independent designers, new media entrepreneurs, in the digital animation and interactive industries, and in colleges and universities teaching animation and interaction related courses. The curriculum philosophy is one of learning through experimentation and practice. Year One is constructed as an *Exploration* year, in which students choose new experiences that will enhance their current understanding of new media. Year Two is a *Practice and Application* year which demands continued exercising and rehearsal of new practices. Year Three results in *Synthesis*, in which students demonstrate a deep understanding of the craft and its context.

The program's three-year curricular sequence reflects the breadth of theory, production and collaborative experiences necessary to properly prepare our students. The program offers a unique blend of instruction from art, art education, art history, sound design, computer science, theatre, film studies, and the humanities, along with newly designed courses targeted at specific production techniques.

Autumn Quarter

Winter Quarter

Spring Quarter

Year One

785 Orientation to Graduate Studies, 4 cr. Critical Analysis, Theory, History, 5 cr. New Tech and Concepts Studio, 3 cr.	Interdisciplinary Collaborative Studio, 5 cr. New Tech and Concepts Studio, 5 cr.	Critical Analysis, Theory, History, 5 cr. New Tech and Concepts Studio, 5 cr. * 3rd Qtr. Studio Review & Assessment
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Year Two

Interdisciplinary Collaborative Studio, 5 cr. 787 Design Planning, Dev and Eval, 4 cr.	Critical Analysis, Theory, History, 5 cr. Advanced Studio Seminar, 5cr. ** Candidacy Review at end of quarter	Advanced Studio Seminar, 5cr. New Tech and Concepts Studio or Interdisciplinary Collaborative Studio, 5 cr
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Year Three

998 Thesis Writing (Independent), 5 cr. 950 Thesis Project (Independent), 5 cr.	780 Thesis Seminar, 5 cr. 950 Thesis Project (Independent), 5 cr.	950/998 Thesis Exit (Ind.), 9 cr.
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Total Credit Hours: 90

CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS

Orientation to Graduate Studies (Design 785) (4 credits)

Critical Analysis, Theory and History (15 credits)

Theoretical and practical analysis of cinematic structure, narrative and objective animation and interactive new media from a Humanities perspective. Students will choose from a menu of existing OSU courses (Appendix A) in these areas or suggest appropriate courses for approval by their adviser.

Interdisciplinary Collaborative Studio (10-15 credits)

Collaboration and interdisciplinary teamwork is a critical component of animation and technology-based production. Students are required to participate in three studios engaging in multidisciplinary activities. Some of the existing courses meeting these criteria are co-taught by faculty in different disciplines, providing a good model for the Interdisciplinary Collaborative Studio course structure. Students will choose from a menu of existing OSU courses (Appendix A) in these areas or suggest appropriate courses for approval by their adviser.

New Technologies and Concepts Studio (13-18 credits)

Animation is a technology-intensive practice in continuous development and change. Students will have a variety of backgrounds and special interests. One solution is to provide new information or special topics in the form of courses based in specific technically-oriented concepts. Students will choose from a menu of existing OSU courses (Appendix A) or suggest appropriate courses for approval by their adviser in the areas of technical skills, programming and algorithms, visual design, audio design, writing and scripting and professional development.

Advanced Studio Seminars (10 credits)

The Seminar Studio are based on a seminar structure, in which students may be independently or collaboratively developing projects. Critique is an emphasis of the seminar, in addition to resource-sharing and periodic review of milestones in productivity. In addition, this would reduce demand for independent studies commitments for faculty. In spring quarter of the second year, the Seminar Studio will accommodate the review process for advancement to candidacy (see Review Process below).

Thesis Seminar, Development, Thesis & Project Studios (33 credits)

One Thesis Development Seminar (Design 787) provides a forum for second year students to formulate thesis research through writing, directed readings and critiques. An additional Thesis Seminar in the third year provides continuation of community research activity and peer review. Additional Thesis writing and production courses are taken independently with members of the student's thesis committee.

THESIS COMMITTEE

The MFA committee shall consist of three committee members, one of whom is a graduate faculty member from the Department of Design. The two additional committee members may be from other disciplines outside of Design but must be directly related to the student's thesis research area.

Committee members shall be selected no later than end of the quarter in which advancement to candidacy takes place (typically the 5th quarter). The committee shall collectively meet at least twice prior to the final thesis examination.

REVIEW PROCESS

Two formal progress reviews and a final Masters examination presided over by the Masters Committee are required to complete the MFA degree.

First Year: 3rd Quarter Studio Review and Assessment

The purpose of the 3rd Quarter Review is to determine satisfactory progress in the program. Students will work with their Contact Adviser and the Graduate Studies Committee to arrange locations and times during which the student will display creative works and be available for informal discussion with participating faculty. It is not expected of the student to have a thesis topic formed at this time, however the student should be prepared for cogent dialog of research interests, and have good representation in creative works culminating from the first year series of studio and theory courses.

The 3rd Quarter Review Form must be approved by participating graduate faculty and signed by the Contact Adviser to be filed with the Graduate Studies Committee. If the decision of the Committee is that satisfactory progress has not been made, the student will be placed on departmental probation for one quarter, and a second progress review will be scheduled to take place during the next quarter in which the student is enrolled. If that review is not satisfactory, the student will be denied continuation in the program.

Second Year: Candidacy Review

Graduate students pursuing the MFA degree are subject to a formal Candidacy review by participating graduate faculty at the end of the fifth quarter in the program. The purpose of the candidacy review is to provide an opportunity for the student to present a preliminary proposal for a thesis or non-thesis project and to initiate formation of the Masters Committee. Students are responsible for maintaining communication and interaction with faculty regarding progress towards the Candidacy Review and committee membership during the 4th and 5th quarters. A proposal statement document must be given to all prospective members of the Masters Committee at least two weeks prior to the progress review. The Candidacy Review must be approved by the participating graduate faculty from Design and two other graduate faculty. These faculty also sign a Committee Approval Form agreeing to serve on the student's Masters Committee.

In the event that the proposal is rejected, the graduate student will have one quarter to reformulate the preliminary proposal based on review recommendations, with a supplementary review scheduled end of the quarter. A student may only have one such supplementary review. If that review is not satisfactory, the student will be denied continuation in the program.

THE THESIS PRODUCT

Requirements for completion of the MFA include:

1. a written thesis (non-thesis)
2. a public presentation with oral defense
3. a thesis exhibition

Thesis exhibition

Exhibition provides experience for students in the planning and organizational requirements necessary for public display of work in a gallery or theatrical environment. Exhibition is expected to take place during the last quarter and in overlap with the dates of the thesis presentation and oral defense. As part of preparation for professional practice in their field, a critical aspect is the successful completion of work and its preparation for public presentation. A student completing his or her thesis will be expected to engage with gallery or screening space organizers and participate in the planning process towards their exhibition dates. The faculty thesis committee will meet regularly in the Thesis Project course with the student during the last two quarters for planning and staging of a gallery installation and/or the development process of time-based work for theatrical screening. The exhibition serves in addition to the written thesis as the body of work from which the Thesis oral defense committee bases its decision process.

Thesis presentation and oral defense

The presentation and defense take place after the written thesis has been completed and during or directly after the thesis work exhibition. The student is expected to give a public one-hour presentation on the topic of their written thesis and thesis work. As with the written thesis, the exact format of the presentation may vary to some extent relevant to the student's form of research. Common to any presentation is:

- Introduction of the research and activities relative to the thesis topic
- The path that led to the thesis topic
- History or background relevant to the thesis
- Relevance of the thesis work to the contemporary field in which the work is most applicable
- The decision-making process for development of the thesis work
- Correlations between the thesis work and written thesis
- Assessment of outcomes of the thesis work and written thesis
- A discussion of continuing interests and next directions

Following the presentation, one hour is dedicated to a question and answer session with the thesis exam committee. This session may have a public audience but questions are restricted to the committee until convening.