

Department of Film & Media Arts M.F.A. Graduate Handbook

Degree Requirements

The Department of Film & Media Arts requires a minimum of 55 graduate level credit hours for graduation.

Required Courses

- FILM 6010, Introduction to Graduate Studies, (students must complete during their first semester)
- FILM 6350, Film Theory
- Students must complete a minimum of two graduate seminar courses.
- Students must complete a minimum of six (6) Thesis Project hours, FILM 6950

Recommended Courses

We strongly recommend that students who plan to teach in the department or in their future careers take CTLE 6000, Teaching in Higher Education

Film history will be a component of all comprehensive exams. We recommend that students without prior film history coursework take FILM 6110, Film History until 1952 and FILM 6120, Film History from 1952.

Elective Courses

Students will select coursework at the 6000 level from the offerings on the Film & Media Arts class schedule. Students may take coursework outside the Department of Film & Media Arts with approval from their committee.

Registration

Students must be registered for at least three credit hours per semester from the time of formal admission to the program until all requirements for the degree, including the defense of the final project, and final examination, are completed.

Master's degree students in a nonthesis program maintain minimum registration by:

1. Registering and paying applicable tuition and fees for at least three credit hours of graduate level course work per semester during the academic year from the time they are admitted to The Graduate School until they have completed all requirements for the degree, including the submission of a final paper or project; or
2. Registering for three credit hours of Faculty Consultation (course number 6980) during any semester in which they are not otherwise enrolled. Please note that 6980 may not be used as part of the program of study.
3. Students who are unable to maintain minimum registration should consider applying for a leave of absence.

Supervisory Committees

The supervisory committee is responsible for approving the student's academic program, approving the thesis project and administering and judging the final oral examination (thesis project defense). The chair of the supervisory committee directs the student's thesis project. Decisions concerning program requirements, examinations, and the thesis project are made by majority vote of the supervisory committee.

All University of Utah faculty members including regular (tenured or tenure track) research, clinical, emeritus, visiting, auxiliary, and adjunct are eligible to serve as supervisory committee members. The faculty member must hold an academic or professional doctorate, the terminal degree in the relevant field, and/or must have demonstrated competence to do research and scholarly or artistic work in the student's general field. Persons not from the University of Utah may also serve as committee members upon approval of the dean of The Graduate School (a vita for the proposed committee members should accompany the request). Committee chairs must be selected from regular faculty (tenured or tenure track). Immediate family members are not eligible to serve on a student's supervisory committee.

The supervisory committee is formed in the second semester of graduate work. The committee must be in place by the Friday before Spring Break. Students who don't meet the deadline will be assigned a committee by the Director of Graduate Studies. It is the responsibility of the student to approach prospective committee members with a view to their willingness and availability to serve in such a capacity. Faculty have the right, however, for justifiable academic reasons, to refuse to serve on a student's supervisory committee.

When the committee is selected the student must provide a list of members to the Graduate Advisor so that they may be entered in the graduate tracking system.

Master's supervisory committees consist of three faculty members, the majority of whom must be regular (tenured or tenure track) faculty in the student's major department.

Students must organize a mandatory meeting with their committee during the fall semester of both the second and third year of study.

Program of Study

A minimum of six credits of thesis project research is required by The Graduate School. Nine to 12 credit hours are elected. All course work counted toward the degree must be approved by the student's supervisory committee. See department for departmental requirements.

A draft program of study comprised of 55 units of coursework must be entered by the end of the second semester. One semester prior to graduation, a complete program of study should be entered into the Graduate Records Tracking System by the Graduate Advisor and then approved by the student's supervisory committee and the director of graduate studies. Once the student is admitted to candidacy for the master's degree, this program of study is reviewed by The Graduate School.

Faculty Consultation, course number 6980, does not count toward thesis hours or fulfillment of degree requirements on the program of study.

The candidate is required to maintain a 3.0 or higher GPA in course work listed on the Program of Study for the master's degree. A grade below B- is not accepted toward a graduate degree.

Applying for Graduation

Beginning in Fall 2010, all candidates for graduation must complete an Application for Graduate Degree with the Graduation Division of the Office of the Registrar. **Applications are due during the semester PRIOR to graduation.**

Details about this application, including application deadlines and the required form, are available at <http://registrar.utah.edu/handbook/graduategraduation.php>.

Departmental Written Comprehensive Examination

All MFA Students must pass a written comprehensive examination taken in two-parts. In part one, students define 15 of 25 terms from film history and the student's coursework. In part two, students answer 1 of 2 essay questions provided by the instructors of any two seminars that the student has completed. The Student's committee will administer and evaluate the results. This examination must be completed prior to the first day of the semester in which the student plans to graduate. Students may be required to re-take the whole or any part of the examination at the discretion of the Department Chair.

Creative Project and Oral Defense

The oral examination is administered and evaluated by the supervisory committee during the semester in which the student anticipates graduation and may not be administered until the Written Comprehensive Examination and all course work has been completed, with the exception of those courses in which the student is currently enrolled.

In lieu of a bound thesis, MFA Students are required to complete a written evaluation of their creative projects; each written evaluation must be approved by the student's MFA Committee. Written evaluations of film projects must be submitted to the supervisory committee chair a minimum of 2 weeks prior to administration to the student's final oral defense.

Students must deposit a copy of their thesis project with the Department in appropriate form i.e. dvd, blu-ray, paper, photographs.

The supervisory committee chair must electronically sign the Report of the Final Project for the Master's Degree and the Report of the Final Examination in the Graduate Tracking System by the last day of the semester in which the student expects to graduate.

Time Limit

All work for the master's degree must be completed within four consecutive calendar years. On recommendation of the student's supervisory committee, the dean of The Graduate School can modify or waive this requirement. If the student exceeds the time limit and is not granted a modification or waiver, the department has the option to discontinue the student.

Graduate Student Dismissal Policy

The focus of the Graduate Program is mature, in-depth artistic and scholarly research. Success in completing the Master of Fine Arts degree requires self-directed thought as well as sustained and completed efforts in all coursework and departmental responsibilities. It also requires responsibility, accountability and collegiality in one's dealing with the faculty, other students and the department at large. Graduate students are expected to maintain a 3.0 or higher GPA (B average or higher). Failure to maintain a 3.0 GPA places that student on probation and will trigger a mandatory meeting with the Department chair as detailed below. (A grade below B- in a required graduate course cannot be applied towards a graduate degree and that course will have to be repeated.)

During the Fall semesters of each year, a student evaluation/review will result in one of the following actions:

- Positive Faculty Review, allowing the student to progress with their graduate studies.
- Probation: If a student's ongoing work in any area of the curriculum is unacceptable, he or she will be graded accordingly and placed on probation pending a meeting with the Department Chair, who, after consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies, the student's Committee Chair and any or all other faculty members whom the Department Chair deems appropriate, will provide written documentation of the requirements that the student needs to fulfill to remain in the program and to be removed from probation. This letter will include time limits by which such requirements need to be completed. If the requirements are not met, then the student may be dismissed at which point s/he will be required to return all Department equipment including keys and cards which grant entry to restricted areas at the earliest possible time. (At the student's request, the Chair will call a meeting of the entire faculty either to gather viewpoints or to vote on a student's progress.) One consequence of probation, at the discretion of the Department chair may be the loss of any TA-ship currently held by the student for the duration of the semester during which that student is on probation.

In addition, students may be terminated from the program for the following reasons:

- a) failure to establish a committee by the end of the first week of their third semester. (We encourage students to do so much earlier.)
- b) failure to satisfactorily complete the qualifying exam at the second attempt. (If upon completion of the exam the first time, the Department evaluators determine that the student's responses do not show satisfactory understanding, the student may be required to rewrite one or more than one section of the exam.)
- c) failure to re-establish a valid committee if for any reason a member or member of the original committee is removed from it, whether by request of the student or the committee member. In such instances the student will be given reasonable time—of at least a month—as determined by the Department chair, in which to find another faculty member or members willing to serve on the student's committee. However, a student may not graduate with an incomplete committee and any new member or members may request that graduation be postponed.

Family Leave Policy

Students who need time off for care-giving and bonding with a newborn or newly-adopted child or for reasons of illness in the family or any other circumstances covered by the Family Medical Leave Act are entitled to take a semester for a family leave of absence for one semester or for any shorter period within a semester or for a period of up to 12 consecutive weeks which may fall partly in two successive semesters. The Department of Film and Media Arts cannot guarantee—and would not normally expect to be able to--offer financial support to Teaching Assistants on family leave at their usual rate of compensation. Please talk with the Department Chair or Director of Graduate Studies if you wish to apply for family leave.

Returning to the program after an absence

If the student took an official leave of absence, or maintained the minimum continuous registration, then there is no special arrangement necessary for the student's return. If a student has a lapse in registration without a leave having been granted, then the student must reapply to the program.