



S C H O O L O F  
C O M M U N I C A T I O N



FILM & MEDIA ARTS

GRADUATE PROGRAMS

*Advising Handbook*

Film & Media Arts

MA in Film and Video

MFA in Film and Electronic Media

Revised: April 2011

This handbook outlines the Degree Requirements for the MA in Film and Video and the MFA in Film and Electronic Media. Please read these carefully and then go to the sections on Course Registration and Advising.

During your first year, I will be your academic advisor and Jean McGee will assist you in the registration process. Your first step should be to develop and send to me a plan that outlines the courses you anticipate taking to complete your degree at American (this plan is flexible, so you are not really committing to anything, just providing me with an idea of your goals). In your first semester you will be satisfying basic requirements, but as you begin to focus on the areas in which you wish to concentrate it will be important for you and I to discuss the options that will best help you achieve these goals. Jean will give you access to the on-line registration process and should you have questions or problems with the process, please feel free to contact Jean. There is a worksheet attached to this handbook which is identical to the one Jean McGee will keep in your file that you can use for this planning and as way of keeping track of your requirements and your progress through the program. Please bring it with you if you come to either of us for advising.

As you progress through the program, you should be getting to know faculty and deciding on which of the full-time faculty or resident artists might be an appropriate mentor to work with you on the capstone project we consider your thesis. Naturally, this person will also be able to assist you in selecting courses that help you build a program to achieve your goals. However, please continue to run your schedule by Jean and me.

Welcome to your graduate degree program at the School of Communication, American University.

We look forward to working with you.

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## DEGREE STRUCTURE

The MA in Film and Video and the MFA in Film and Electronic Media are comprised of Degree Requirements that are common to most masters' degree programs at American University.

These elements include:

1. Required core course work
2. Elective course work
3. A research component – 6 hours of thesis research or portfolio project work completed with a grade of B or better
4. Comprehensive exam

The MA in Film and Video is comprised of 36 credit hours and the MFA in Film and Electronic Media is comprised of 51 credit hours. In order to graduate, students must have an overall 3.0 GPA and complete each element as outlined below. One of the strengths of our graduate degrees is that candidates do not have to have any previous coursework or experience in photography, film, video or new media production. Our candidates for the MA and the MFA come from a wide variety of backgrounds and bring a fascinating mix of interests to the program.

### 1. REQUIRED CORE COURSEWORK

Each degree has a series of core courses that are required of all candidates. Some of these core courses are prerequisites for the advanced courses that the candidate may elect to take. Except as noted, students generally take these core courses in the first year of the program. 9-10 credits per semester are considered full-time at the graduate level. All candidates will take Film & Video Production I & II and Writing for Visual Media in the first semester and Film Theory and Practice in the second semester. (Although not a requirement, we encourage MA candidates who have not taken a basic photography class take Principles of Photography prior to or during their first year. We offer COMM-630 Principles of Photography during the summer and in every regular semester.)

- Required Core Coursework for MA in Film and Video – 15 credit hours:

- COMM-631 Film and Video Production 1 (Must be taken in first semester of study. Course paired with Film & Video Production II, both pairs should be taken on same day with the same division faculty member)
- COMM-634 Film and Video Production 2 (Must be taken in first semester of study. See note above)
- COMM-682 Writing for Visual Media (Must be taken in first semester of study)
- COMM-513 Producing Film and Video (generally taken in second year)
- COMM-701 Graduate Seminar in Film Theory and Practice (must be taken in the spring semester of your first year)
- Required Core Coursework for MFA in Film and Electronic Media – 24 credit hours:
  - COMM-630 Principles of Photography
  - COMM-631 Film and Video Production 1 (Must be taken in first semester of study. Course paired with Film & Video Production II, both pairs should be taken on same day with the same division faculty member)
  - COMM-634 Film and Video Production 2 (Must be taken in first semester of study. See note above)
  - COMM-650 Basic Digital Imaging or 3 hours of New Media coursework
  - COMM-682 Writing for Visual Media (Must be taken in first semester of study)
  - COMM-701 Graduate Seminar in Film Theory and Practice (must be taken in the spring of your year)
  - COMM-513 Producing Film and Video (generally taken in second year)
  - COMM-711 Teaching Seminar in Media Arts (generally taken in spring of second or third year)<sup>1</sup>

Some students decide to take a semester and study in Prague under the special program we have with FAMU, the film academy of the Czech Republic. This usually takes place during the spring semester. Students may apply with portfolio in-lieu of the appropriate course-work. Students may substitute advanced level production electives at American University for those taken in

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<sup>1</sup> Students registering in the **Teaching Seminar in Media Arts** are required to attend the annual Ann Ferren Teaching Conference usually held in mid-January *before* regular classes begin.

Prague. All course work taken at FAMU will count toward your degree program but you should consult with your advisor before going abroad.

## 2. ELECTIVE COURSEWORK

Each degree program allows for elective courses of the student's choice. These electives may be selected to expose the student to a wide variety of media production and media studies or, they can be selected to create a concentration on a particular aspect of the program. Some concentrations, suggested later in this workbook include electives from other schools and colleges in the university. Courses from other departments that are determined to be appropriate for a student's program may be taken with permission of the Division Director or your advisor but all must be at the 5-hundred level or above in order to get graduate credit. Students are required to discuss their plan for the elective courses that will best serve their interests with the Division Director. Students should carefully note the different course prerequisites to make sure that they are eligible to take a particular course when they plan to.

- Elective Coursework for MA in Film and Video: 15 credit hours (5 courses) in production, writing, media studies, photography, new media, or producing
- Elective Coursework for MFA in Film and Electronic Media: 21 credit hours (7 courses) as per the following categories
  - Media History courses – students must take two of the following courses<sup>2</sup>:
    - COMM-511 History of Documentary
    - COMM-517 History of Cross Cultural Cinema
    - COMM-516 Topics: Visual Media & Culture (as appropriate)
    - COMM-520 History of Animation
    - COMM-527 History of Photography
    - COMM-558 Survey of American Cinema

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<sup>2</sup> Not all listed courses are offered each year and other media history courses not listed above may be substituted. Consult the Schedule of Classes and advisor.

- COMM-570 (a media history course is usually offered in the Summer Film & Video Institute)
- COMM-586 History of Czech Cinema (offered in Prague)
- Production and Writing courses – 2 courses (6-credit hours)
- Media Studies and Producing courses –1 course
- General electives – 2 courses (can be production, writing, photography, new media, media studies, or producing)

### 3. THESIS PROJECT

To complete the MA in Film and Video and the MFA in Film and Electronic Media, most students produce an original creative work or Portfolio Project in the areas of film or video production, scriptwriting, or new media. Academically, the university considers the project in-lieu-of-thesis and satisfies the thesis/non-thesis option requirement of the University for the M.A. and M.F.A. degrees. Students in the M.A. in Film and Video program normally are required to do a creative, in-lieu-of-thesis project by enrolling in three hours of portfolio credit under the course number COMM 702, while students in the M.F.A. in Film and Electronic Media program are required to enroll in six hours of COMM 702 portfolio credit. Students can take from one to six credit hours of COMM 702 Master's Portfolio Seminar in one semester. AS you begin thinking about your thesis production, you should refer to the information on the web about the process or request a copy of the current course syllabus from the Division Director. To satisfy this research requirement, students producing a thesis portfolio project enroll in the following:

- Research Requirement for MA in Film and Video:
  - COMM-701 Graduate Seminar in Film Theory and Practice (3 credit hours; must be taken in the first year)
  - COMM-702 Master's Portfolio Seminar (3 credit hours)
  
- Research Requirement for MFA in Film and Electronic Media:
  - COMM-702 Master's Portfolio Seminar (6 credit hours)

The faculty expects students involved in production work to develop and execute their work over one or two semesters, but certainly within one full calendar year. If you have registered for all three or six hours of portfolio credit needed to satisfy your degree requirement, but have not finished your project by the end of the term, the university requires continuous matriculation from when you enter to when you graduate. This means you will have to pay a maintaining matriculation fee (equivalent to one graduate credit hour) in the next regular academic term. You will not have to maintain matriculation over the summer; unless you have run out of the access you need to SOC equipment and facilities. Students requiring the use of university

facilities and equipment must take the sections of COMM 702 that has a lab fee attached. Those not intending to use university facilities or equipment may enroll in the sections without lab fees.

Another way to satisfy the University's thesis/non-thesis option requirement is to take academic courses and not do a project, which in some special cases may be appropriate for a student. For instance, a portfolio internship might be an alternative for MA students. Additional coursework such as appropriate courses in the business school, perhaps something to support the area of marketing or distribution, or a class in the College of Arts & Sciences that might be appropriate for a candidate interested in Wildlife or environmental filmmaking or a class in School of International Service for a candidate involved with international communication or production outside the U.S. If appropriate, you should discuss this option with your advisor and not register for COMM-702 Master's Portfolio Seminar.

The Portfolio Project created in the Master's Portfolio Seminar should be an original creative work of such scope and quality as to present your talent and abilities in the best possible way. The work will be your calling card to open doors for a successful career in the film and media arts professions, or prepare you to enter the academy as a teacher at the college or university level. It should be one of the most challenging and creative projects you have ever undertaken.

An in-lieu-of-thesis or non-thesis project (these are formal terms relating to University requirements; (we will call it a **thesis project** or **portfolio project** from now on), resulting in portfolio quality work, is a sizable undertaking. The actual length of the final product may vary, but the quantity, as well as the quality of work involved clearly must be significant. The length of the project should be appropriate to its proposed end use. Obviously, there is a trade-off in length for quality or complexity of the project. **Quality and production values are of paramount importance.** The project should reflect a level of effort appropriate to the course credit hours you invest in the project: three for MA and six for MFA. Work may likely extend past a semester. You will work with one member of the division faculty as a Thesis Advisor and two additional faculty members who will assist you in some aspect of the production (one may be from outside the school and need not be faculty). This is your Portfolio Review Committee.

Your Portfolio Review Committee will discuss and determine the appropriate nature and length of the project during the initial review of the proposal for the project.

In the past, students have worked alone and in groups to produce documentary, dramatic, instructional and information films and videotapes, digital imaging, as well as multimedia projects. Most team projects consist of two or three students. The faculty expects teams to undertake more complicated or longer projects. When working in a group, each person must be able to make clear their role as a key contributor in a way that supports their educational goals.

Often, outside organizations have sponsored projects and paid part or all the expenses associated with the productions. You may choose to produce work for a client or sponsor so long as authorship of the piece is clearly yours, the quality and production values are consistent with the faculty's goals for your project. We encourage this, and many students have supported their thesis project work this way in the past. Discuss the relationship you expect to have with your client/sponsor with your Thesis Advisor and make sure you explain the relationship in your proposal.

Quite a few students write screenplays for their thesis projects. (If you are doing one or several screenplays, or you are doing a sponsored project that does not require the use of university facilities or equipment, you should enroll in the section of COMM-702 Master's Portfolio Seminar that does not have a lab fee attached.)

Here is a summary of general guidelines, based upon prior student work, to give you some idea of the scope of a project you may want to undertake:

**Documentary.** Typically, this would be about half an hour for the M.A. and up to an hour or possibly two shorter projects for the MFA; the project is normally suitable for television or cable programming.

**Fiction.** You could produce this on 16mm film, on Beta-SP or three-chip mini-DV, or HD; it would normally run between 15 to 20 minutes for the MA, and 30 to 40 minutes for the MFA or

two shorter projects; MFA students, working in teams, have produced feature length (90 minutes) films. The ideal approach is to consider this the capstone piece for your portfolio and prepare a project suitable for festivals, cable networks and/or internet film channels.

**Script.** You may write a feature length script, with rewrites, or two shorter television scripts. The number of scripts often is not indicative of the effort, care, and talent needed to produce them. Of far greater importance is the challenge posed to the writer by the project, the degree of originality demonstrated, the depth of the work, and the skill demonstrated by the writer.

**Digital Image.** Your work should be achievable on a CD-ROM, or be about 650 megabytes.

**Multimedia.** You might do a Website involving multiple pages of text and graphics.

**Animation.** In film or video, this could be between 5 and 10 minutes.

#### **4. COMPREHENSIVE EXAM**

Each semester, the Film & Media Arts division schedules comprehensive exams, required by the University for all Masters Degrees. The Comprehensive exam is a review of the candidates' portfolio by a team of faculty.

Students normally take the Comprehensive Exam during their last or next-to-last semester in the program. Exams are graded as "Unsatisfactory", "Satisfactory" or "Distinction". Students must receive either a "Satisfactory" or "Distinction". A student who receives an "Unsatisfactory" grade is required to repeat the Exam in a following semester.

The exam requires candidates submit:

- A resume
- A written analysis and critique of the work they have produced in their program
- A professional portfolio of their work

MA Candidates prepare a written paper that explains their projects. The paper provides a description of their work, the development of their voice, vision, or personal style, personal purpose, etc., what they have learned through the process and how the focus of their work supports their professional goals. This is a reflective and honest assessment of the student's work to date as well as a charting of their future professional goals. The paper should include sections on production, writing, marketing and distribution, and craft skills as appropriate to the nature of their work. A discussion of their next project(s) which could be appropriate which might be the premise for their thesis, one that puts the thesis project into perspective *vis a vis* the preceding body of work. The length should be no more than 10 pages,

MFA Candidates prepare a written paper similar to the description above and including the relevance of their work to their professional goals, but the document should include a discussion that puts their collected works into an appropriate historical and theoretical context. They should be able to identify the genre(s) in which they are working and describe how their work contributes to the social context if appropriate and to the scholarship as appropriate. The length should be no more than 20 pages.

The comprehensive is footnoted and should contain a bibliography.

Along with the written portion of the Comprehensive exam, Candidates emphasizing production submit a DVD portfolio of their work or provide a web link to their on-line portfolio. This should be samples selected from their best work and should relate to the written discussion demonstrating their voice, vision, or personal style, personal purpose, or specific production skills that they wish to highlight for the faculty. Candidates should identify the works on the reel as to title and the Candidate's role in the productions. The reel can include short, complete productions and trailers excerpted from pieces longer than 5 minutes. The reel should display the student's work in the best possible light.

Candidates emphasizing writing submit a professional writing portfolio. This should be a focused collection of writing assembled to demonstrate your voice, vision, or personal style, personal purpose, or specific writing genres. The portfolio should reflect the quality and, if

appropriate the versatility of your writing and support your professional and/or academic goals. There should be a general statement explaining the works included and relating them to the candidate's professional or academic goals. Each piece should be identified with a short synopsis and a statement that clarifies what is unique about the selection and how the piece demonstrates of the candidate's capabilities and if appropriate how it relates to the underlying logic of the presentation.

## 6. CONCENTRATIONS

Candidates working with the Division Director will be able map out a plan of coursework that best meets their career goals. The following are some examples of courses that represent concentrations in New Media, Narrative Production and Environmental and Wildlife Filmmaking. These are suggestions and not meant to limit your choices.

### **Concentration in New Media**

The New Media Concentration in the Film and Media Arts Division offers two tracks for students to follow:

Web or  
Motion Graphics and Effects

Students wishing to concentrate in new media production should consult with Prof. Brigid Maher, and consult with the director of the Film and Media Arts program, John Douglass. You should map your course plan for each semester in careful consultation with Profs. Maher and Douglass.

#### **Required and Entry-Level Courses:**

- COMM 650 Digital Imaging (Pre-req: Previous computer experience)
- COMM 638 Web Development (Pre-req: Digital Imaging or previous graphic software experience) 1.5 Credits taught in 1<sup>st</sup> half of semester
- COMM 638 Dynamic Websites (Pre-req: Web Development) 1.5 Credits taught in 2<sup>nd</sup> half of semester

#### **Advanced Courses:**

- COMM 654 Motion Graphics & Effects I
- COMM 516 Topics in Film and Media Arts: Motion Graphics and Effects II
- COMM 638 Blogs and Dynamic Sites 1.5 Credits
- COMM 638 Introduction to Flash 1.5 Credits
- COMM 638 Flash for Gaming 1.5 Credits

#### **ADDITIONAL COURSES**

- COMM 565 Portfolio Course
- COMM 691 Graduate Internship

### **Concentration in Narrative Production**

Students may concentrate in narrative story-telling and production with the goal of entering the entertainment industry. Some courses are entry-level graduate courses, others advanced specialized courses, and still others electives. Students interested in narrative production regularly take advantage of the study abroad opportunity at FAMU in Prague and the Summer in LA program.

Required and Entry-Level Courses: In most required courses and other F&MA entry-level courses (such as Writing for Visual Media, Film & Video Production I and II, Principles of Photography, Digital Imaging, and introductory new media production classes) students may develop their narrative story-telling skills in some of the class assignments and final projects with the approval of the teacher.

Courses Specifically Designed for the Narrative Concentration:

- COMM 638 Creative Sound Techniques
- COMM 638 Cinematography
- COMM 656 Dramatic Production
- COMM 664 Directing for Camera
- COMM XXX (Course number pending) Writing the Short Film
- COMM 561 Advanced Writing for Film
- COMM 562 Advanced Writing for TV
- COMM 569 Executive Suite
- COMM 574 The Business of Television
- COMM XXX Master (course number pending) Class in Screenwriting

Media Studies: Study of genres, directorial styles and historical trends in production are an important component of your education and we regularly offer several classes in these areas such as:

- COMM-558 Survey of American Cinema
- COMM 516 Masters of European Cinema
- COMM-520 History of Animation
- COMM-586 History of Czech Cinema (offered in Prague)

Additionally, appropriate classes are offered in the Departments of Literature and Performing Arts:

- LIT 646 National Cinema
- LIT 646 Topics in Film
- LIT 702 Creative Writing Film Script
- PERF 552 Directing Techniques
- PERF 557 Creative Writers Performance Lab

### **Concentration in Environmental and Wildlife Filmmaking**

Graduate students may concentrate their studies in environmental and wildlife filmmaking through the Center for Environmental Filmmaking. Some courses are entry-level graduate courses, others advanced specialized graduate courses, and still others electives. Please consult with the director, Chris Palmer, or the associate directors about the concentration, and also consult with the director of the Film and Media Arts program, John Douglass. You should map your course plan for each semester in careful consultation with faculty advisers and CEF directors.

**Required and Entry-Level Courses:** In most required courses and other F&MA entry-level courses such as Writing for Visual Media, Film & Video Production I and II, Principles of Photography, Digital Imaging, and introductory new media production classes, students may work on environmental and wildlife assignments and final projects with the approval of the teacher.

**Advanced Courses:**

- Advanced Writing for Documentary Film COMM-596
- Advanced Editing COMM-621
- Social Documentary COMM-512
- Documentary Production COMM-686
- Producing Film & Video COMM-513
- Several web classes

**Electives:** To encourage exposure to scientific, environmental and biological underpinnings of the field, the department has reached out to faculty in CAS, who has agreed to accommodate our graduate students in their science courses. Consult your advisor for current listing.

**Courses Specifically Designed for the Concentration:**

- Producing Environmental and Wildlife Films COMM-524
- Environmental and Wildlife Film Production COMM-568
- Practice of Environmentalism (course number pending)
- Classroom in the Wild: HD Alaska (course number pending)

**Classroom in the Wild COMM-080** offers students direct field experience during semester breaks and summer vacations. This is a non-credit course but specific fees apply in lieu of tuition.

### **Concentration in Social Documentary**

Students interested in the study of or production of social documentaries will find many opportunities in addition to course-work. There are regular speakers and master classes from visiting filmmakers hosted by the Center for Social Media. The Center also hosts the annual Human Rights Film Festival and each spring the AFI and Discover Communications host Silverdocs, a major documentary film festival that provides many opportunities for students as

interns and volunteers exposing students to some of most important documentarians working today.

Required and Entry-Level Courses: In most required courses and other F&MA entry-level courses (such as Writing for Visual Media, Film & Video Production I and II, Principles of Photography, Digital Imaging, and introductory new media production classes) students may develop their documentary story-telling skills in some of the class assignments and final projects with the approval of the teacher.

**Advanced Courses:**

- Advanced Writing for Documentary Film (course number pending)
- Social Documentary COMM-512
- Producing Film & Video COMM-513
- Advanced Editing COMM-621
- Advanced Documentary Technique COMM-686
- Web classes COMM-638

**Courses Specifically Designed for the Concentration:**

- History of Documentary COMM-511
- Social Documentary COMM-512
- Community Documentary COMM-516
- Documentary Storytelling COMM-516
- Investigative Pub Affairs Doc (course number pending)
- Cross Cultural Film/Video Prod (course number pending)

## 7. Advising Work Sheets

### M.A. in Film & Video (2011-2012)

The 36 credit hours of coursework must include:

Required SOC Courses	Semester	Grade
<p><b>COMM-631: Film &amp; Video Production I</b> (Must be taken in first semester of study. Course paired with Film &amp; Video Production II, both pairs should be taken on same day with the same division faculty member)</p> <p>Fundamental technical and aesthetic considerations involved in visual media production. Through projects in audiotape, 35mm slides, and small format video that are critiqued in class, students learn the principles and procedures of sound recording and editing, cinematography, editing visual images, and preproduction planning.</p>		
<p><b>COMM-634: Film &amp; Video Production II</b> (Must be taken in first semester of study)</p> <p>Includes 16mm silent and small-format video location production. Emphasis is on planning, treatment and shot scripting, development of scene and character, location lighting, refinements of continuity, location sound recording, and visual design.</p>		
<p><b>COMM-682: Writing for Visual Media</b> (Must be taken in first semester of study)</p> <p>Techniques of writing scripts for film and television productions. Students write and criticize assignments. No production is involved in this course.</p>		
<p><b>COMM-701: Graduate Seminar in Film Theory &amp; Practice</b> (Must be taken in spring semester of first year of study)</p> <p>The seminar focuses on the development of film theory and criticism. The work of Arnheim, Eisenstein, Kracauer, Bazin, Mitry, and Metz are studied as primary sources. The relationship between theory and production is examined and applied to analysis of specific films.</p> <p>(Non-thesis option must be completed with a grade of "B" (3.0) or better.)</p>		
<p><b>COMM-513: Producing for Film &amp; Video</b></p> <p>Nontheatrical film marketing and production management. Preliminary research and development of the film proposal; preparation of treatments, contracts, and budgets; cost analysis of production; and relationships between aesthetics and expenses. Use of Washington as a laboratory for marketing experience, including actual client contact.</p>		
Approved Elective*		
Approved Elective*		
Approved Elective*		
Approved Elective*		
Approved Elective*		
Approved Elective*		
Approved Elective*		
<p><b>COMM-702: Master's Portfolio Seminar</b></p> <p>(Non-thesis project must be completed with a grade of "B" (3.0) or better)</p>		
<p><b>Comprehensive Exam, Film &amp; Video</b></p> <p>All students must take and pass the Comprehensive Examination.</p>		

\*A sequence of 18 credit hours of course work designed to meet individual interests and needs. Programs may also include courses in related areas such as performing arts, photography, and literature (film and screen writing courses).

## M.F.A. in Film & Electronic Media

Your 51 credit hours of coursework must include:

Prerequisite Courses <i>Students with no prior experience in photography will be required to take a basic black and white photography course before taking advanced courses in media production. These 3 credits do not count toward the degree requirements.</i>	Semester	Grade
<b>COMM-630: Principles of Photography</b> (No credit toward MFA) Introduction to basic technical and aesthetic principles of photography, from loading film into a 35mm camera to developing and printing final images. Students practice basic black and white laboratory work and basic color slide analog and digital utilization.		
Core SOC Courses (27 credits)	Semester	Grade
<b>COMM-631: Film &amp; Video Production I</b> (Must be taken in first semester of study. Course paired with Film & Video Production II, both pairs should be taken on same day with the same division faculty member) Fundamental technical and aesthetic considerations involved in visual media production. Through projects in audiotape, 35mm slides, and small format video that are critiqued in class, students learn the principles and procedures of sound recording and editing, cinematography, editing visual images, and preproduction planning.		
<b>COMM-634: Film &amp; Video Production II</b> (Must be taken in first semester of study) Includes 16mm silent and small-format video location production. Emphasis is on planning, treatment and shot scripting, development of scene and character, location lighting, refinements of continuity, location sound recording, and visual design.		
<b>COMM-650: Digital Imaging</b> Students become proficient in utilizing paint software, specifically Photoshop's basic painting, selection and retouching tools. They also become familiar with basic layers, channels and compositing options in the most current formats, and utilize the Digital Lab for their assignments.  or  <b>3 Credits of New Media Coursework</b>		
<b>COMM-682: Writing for Visual Media</b> (Must be taken in first semester of study) Techniques of writing scripts for film and television productions. Students write and criticize assignments. No production is involved in this course.		
<b>COMM-701: Graduate Seminar in Film Theory &amp; Practice</b> (Must be taken within first year) The seminar focuses on the development of film theory and criticism. The work of Arnheim, Eisenstein, Kracauer, Bazin, Mitry, and Metz are studied as primary sources. The relationship between theory and production is examined and applied to analysis of specific films. (Non-thesis option must be completed with a grade of "B" (3.0) or better.)		
<b>COMM-513: Producing for Film &amp; Video</b> (generally taken in 2 <sup>nd</sup> year) Nontheatrical film marketing and production management. Preliminary research and development of the film proposal; preparation of treatments, contracts, and budgets; cost analysis of production; and relationships between aesthetics and expenses. Use of Washington as a laboratory for marketing experience, including actual client contact.		
<b>COMM-711: Teaching Seminar in Media Arts</b> (generally taken in 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> year) Provides MFA in Film and Electronic Media candidates with an overview of teaching philosophies, course management issues, curriculum issues in communication, academic culture, and related institutions significant to the teaching of visual media. Reading projects, class lecture, and discussion are balanced with teaching experience.		

<p><b>Media History Requirement*</b> (Choose two of the following.) * Not all courses are offered each year and other media history courses not listed above may be substituted. Consult your advisor.</p>		
<p><b>COMM-511: History of Documentary</b> Development of the documentary form from early cinema to the digital era. Explores documentary in terms of aesthetic strategies, ethical issues, and economic and historical context.</p>		
<p><b>COMM-512 Social Documentary</b> Study of successful approaches to social action documentary, including museum display, development, conflict resolution, and advocacy. Students analyze case studies, learn economic and social context, and develop proposals for social documentary.</p>	Semester	Grade
<p><b>COMM-516: Topic-The Radical Image</b> This course is a survey of different movement of art in terms of photography, video, film and the emerging digital medium. We look at artists who skew our opinion of reality, as well as deal with issues such as gender and identity. You will also complete a visual component to the course as part of your evaluation, in any of the aforementioned mediums. Some of the theories we will look at include Surrealism, Hyper realism, Magic Realism and the reconstruction/ deconstruction of images. Prerequisite: COMM 330, 331 or 350</p>		
<p><b>COMM-516: Topic - Masters of European Cinema</b> A survey of major film movements and national cinematic styles of Europe. Students view the works of prominent directors and compare themes and objectives of European cinema to those of the classic Hollywood narrative film.</p>		
<p><b>COMM-517: History of Cross-Cultural Cinema</b> Cross-cultural analysis of film and video, drawing primarily on examples of feature production from Asia, Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East and focusing on the theme of cultural and ethnic identity. Film and video viewings, papers, lectures, and discussion.</p>		
<p><b>COMM-520: History of Animation</b> The history, theory, and practice of animating visual imagery, from Victorian motion toys to Disney and Hollywood's Golden Age to the contemporary boom in animation through computer-assisted technology. Critical examination of animation as a vehicle of entertainment, education, commercial persuasion, and propaganda. Class projects demonstrate different animation techniques.</p>		
<p><b>COMM-527: History of Photography</b> A survey of the development of photographic imagery from its advent in the early nineteenth century through contemporary twentieth century work. Emphasis is on viewing work in Washington galleries and museums.</p>		
<p><b>COMM-558: Survey of American Cinema</b> Origins and historical development of American cinema, specifically the theatrical feature-length fiction film from the nineteenth century to 1970. Hollywood films as mythic representations of the way Americans viewed themselves. Films are screened, discussed, and criticized. Screenings are scheduled in addition to class sessions.</p>		
<p><b>COMM-586: History of Czech Cinema</b> Part of the AU Abroad Semester in Prague. Through viewing and lectures by some of the most important films in the Czech lands, the course covers the areas of film history most notable to the development of film language in Bohemia: the influences of realism and neorealism, the Czech New Wave and its aftermath, the avant-garde, the animated film, the FAMU Film School Phenomenon, and the short film.</p>		
<p><b>Research Requirement (Non-thesis project, 6 credits)</b></p>		
<p><b>COMM-702: Master's Portfolio Seminar</b> Independent work toward project in lieu of thesis for students in the graduate film programs. Consult graduate program director for registration and participation requirements. Usually offered every term. Prerequisite: permission of the school. (Must be completed with a grade of "B" (3.0) or better.)</p>		

**Production and Writing Requirement****(Choose two of the following. Courses cannot be counted twice.)**

<p>COMM-516: Topic- Motion Graphics and Effects II This course is a continuation of COMM-454/654 Motion Graphics and Effects I, and it is assumed that students have a working knowledge of basic still and motion compositing programs. Through the discussion of concepts, techniques, protocols, and hands-on projects, students improve their design, compositing, and animation craft. Additionally, students rely upon the individual and collective imagination and creativity of the class to complete their work. Examples of outside work are presented and analyzed in class. Hands-on work enables students to become proficient in current software and concepts used for cutting-edge motion graphics and compositing in motion pictures, television, commercials and music video. Students become proficient in intermediate compositing and animating skills</p>		
<p>COMM-516 Documentary Storytelling Community Documentary Teams of anthropology and communication students produce media projects of direct use to non-profit, community, labor, and social justice organizations. Projects capture the narratives of under-represented people in their own words, using cameras and other digital media, to address pressing issues of health, labor, sexuality, the environment, housing, education, and hunger.</p>	Semester	Grade
<p>COMM-523: Topic- Intermediate Photography A refinement of photographic skills emphasizing a synthesis of craft and expression.</p>		
<p>COMM-544: Foreign Correspondence This course prepares students to work as journalists, photographers, documentary makers, and social media producers in foreign countries and provides research skills and training applicable in business, non-profit, non-governmental organizations as well. It examines the structure/process of news/information gathering and journalistic standards. Students build a Trip File with analysis and story ideas to execute overseas.</p>		
<p>COMM-561: Advanced Writing for Film May be repeated for credit but not in the same term. Emphasizes theatrical film scriptwriting. Students are expected to write a feature-length screenplay during the course of the semester. Students also read and review professionally-written screenplays.</p>		
<p>COMM-562: Advanced Writing for Television Maybe repeated for credit but not in the same term. A workshop that stimulates the collaboration experience of a studio writing staff. Students learn to pitch and develop stories for ongoing prime-time shows while polishing skills in story development and characterization. A portfolio-quality "spec" script is the end product.</p>		
<p>COMM-570: Summer Film and Video Institute Topics vary by section, and may be repeated for credit with different topic. Current practices and trends in the film, video, and television professions. Offered on weekends and evenings during the summer, the institute schedule allows students to select courses in film and video production, direction, writing, design, and management, post-production editing, and other related fields. Small classes and active participation are stressed.</p>		
<p>COMM-584: Film Technology and Practice (6 credits) Part of the AU Abroad Semester in Prague. Introduction to concepts in visual communication through the use of still picture, video, and 16 mm non-sync sound film in color. Camera technology; exponometry, studio lighting, editing and sound recording, accompanied by analytical screenings and site visits to labs, with a series of sessions with supervising directors, and script consultations. Students edit work-print and magnetic sound on final films.</p>		
<p>COMM-565 Advanced Visual Media Portfolio Students pursue in-depth visual media projects for their professional portfolios. The course is multi-visual media; students may work in still, moving, or digital image, or any combination of media in which they are proficient. Most class participants produce two projects during the semester. Group critiques are required.</p>		
<p>COMM-567: Communication and Social Change An intensive, hands-on course for film and media arts, journalism, and public communication students to develop a social issue media campaign. The primary goal of the class is the production of various forms of communication media to address a major social issue. Prerequisite: COMM-301 or COMM-320 or COMM-331/631 or COMM-640 or COMM-724.</p>		
<p>COMM-587: Screenwriting Part of the AU Abroad Semester in Prague. In this writing workshop, students are given assignments to write scenes and scripts for short films and analyze films and scenes to learn the basis of dramatic principles, story patterns, and genres. The final project is a script for a short</p>		

film.		
<p>COMM-568: Wildlife and Environmental Film Production Students research, write, produce, shoot, and edit environmental and wildlife films. The goal of the course is the production of films and animations for nonprofit organizations dedicated to environmental stewardship. Note: out-of-town location shooting may be required during October. Prerequisite: COMM-524 Producing Environmental and Wildlife Films and COMM-634.</p>		
<p>COMM-635: Introduction to Studio Television A hands-on laboratory course to teach basic studio operation and production skills, including directing, lighting, crewing, engineering, and production planning. Students are required to work on a variety of studio formats.</p>		
<p>COMM-638: Production Practicum (topics vary by semester) Topics vary by section, may be repeated for credit with different topic. Provides students with skills training in a variety of media production areas. Topics include non-linear editing, digital post production, location sound production, studio sound production and mixing, location lighting techniques, cinematography, digital authoring, and coding. Prerequisite: COMM-434 or permission of school, and minimum 2.5 GPA.</p>		
<p>COMM-638: Web Development (1.5 credits) This course provides students with an overview of web development using code and development tools. Students learn the basic knowledge to create their own on-line content and web site.</p>		
<p>COMM-638: Dynamic Websites (1.5 credits) In this course students learn about creating dynamic Web 2.0 content and customize cascading style sheets (CSS) to create their own websites. Students gain hands on experience in how to integrate video and audio content into their sites as well as podcasting and blogging</p>		
<p>COMM-650: Digital Imaging and Design An introduction to the technical aspects of digital imaging and basic techniques such as selection and retouching tools that challenges students to create effective visual communication designs. The course includes how to effectively use layers, channels, and masks to edit and composite images with discussions focusing on creating and recognizing effective visual communication concepts and carrying out these concepts through design. Students should expect to spend additional time in the lab outside of the scheduled class time.</p>		
<p>COMM-654: Motion Graphics and Effects I This course focuses on the creation of motion graphics using animation and compositing programs. Through discussions of concepts and design, students learn techniques to creatively use software tools to achieve dramatic and artistic effects. Current software and concepts used for cutting edge motion graphics and compositing in motion pictures, television, commercials, and music videos are introduced and examples of outside work are presented and analyzed in class. Students are encouraged to learn from each other's examples, problems, and solutions. Students should expect to spend additional time in the lab outside of the scheduled class time. Meets with COMM-354. Usually offered every term. Prerequisite: COMM-650 or permission of school.</p>		
<p>COMM-656: Dramatic Film Production Techniques of 16mm sound-film production: lighting, sound recording, cinematography, and post production.</p>		
<p>COMM-664: Directing for Camera Examines the role of the director in the dramatic film environments. The course focuses on creative and aesthetic concerns as well as technical knowledge and skills the director needs to function successfully as a storyteller. Includes discussions and demonstrations and guest speakers including directors and actors. Students undertake individual projects.</p>		
<p>COMM XXX (course number pending) Writing the Short Film This course exposes students to basic story principles as they apply to the short form. The course focuses on screenwriting fundamentals such as dramatic structure and plot development, characterization, visual scene writing, and dialogue. Students learn through practice by writing several short scripts as well as by studying great examples of the short form</p>		
<p>COMM XXX (course number pending) Backpack Documentary This course incorporates field experience with the latest high definition, tapeless digital cameras to prepare students for work as video journalists, documentarians, filmmakers, and independent storytellers. It covers the gamut of the craft from the genesis and shaping of story ideas, to shooting powerful images that drive the story, to the capture and use of sound, to script writing, narration, and editing with Final Cut Pro.</p>		

<p>COMM XXX (course number pending) Cross Cultural Film/Video Prod This course provides intermediate-level students in film and media arts with hands-on opportunities to advance student basic filmmaking skills, including pre-production, camera operation, lighting, directing, and digital non-linear editing. Students work directly with film and video students from Tec De Monterrey University in Mexico and a university in Canada via video conferences, email, Facebook, web cam, Skype and face-to-face meetings to produce mini-documentaries on culture, politics, or policy that affect daily lives in all three countries. Students are encouraged but not required to travel with the class during the semester to Mexico or Canada as a component of the course.</p>		
<p>COMM XXX (course number pending) Practice of Environmentalism This course brings together students and faculty in environmental science, international politics, and media production to forge an interdisciplinary approach to the study of environmental action. Students learn field research methods, policy analysis, and documentary communication techniques. Each student, as part of an interdisciplinary team, produces a major media project focusing on a particular environmental challenge. Students also participate in a mandatory two-week, 1 or 3 credit field component in the Galapagos in mid-May or Alaska in early August to explore firsthand the challenges of promoting ecological sustainability in these unique regions. Prerequisite: permission of instructor, application required.</p>		
<p>COMM-686: Documentary Production An intermediate course in field video production. Includes script, directing, production skills (camera, light, and sound), post-production, and technical developments. Students work independently and in groups.</p>		
<b>Media Studies and Producing Requirement (Choose one from below)</b>		
<p>COMM-511: History of Documentary Development of the documentary form from early cinema to the digital era. Explores documentary in terms of aesthetic strategies, ethical issues, and economic and historical context.</p>		
<p>COMM-512: Social Documentary Study of successful approaches to social action documentary, including museum display, development, conflict resolution, and advocacy. Students analyze case studies, learn economic and social context, and develop proposals for social documentary.</p>		
<p>COMM-514: Censorship in the Media A survey of the history of censorship in the U.S. today in the newspapers, magazines, radio, movies, publishing, and television. International comparisons are drawn, and the problem of censorship in the schools is given special attention.</p>		
<p>COMM-515: Media, Children, and Society Social implications of media produced for children – TV, film, video, and the Internet. Course includes market research, industry analysis, policy framework, cultures of childhood, and media literacy.</p>		
<p>COMM-524: Producing Environmental and Wildlife Films: The Art of Producing The course will examine the goals, strategies and tactics necessary to produce successful environmental and wildlife films in today's complex market. We will be developing a deeper understanding of what it means to be successful in this area. The class will be run to some degree like a film production company in order to give students a feel for what it takes to succeed in the real world. Although the course focuses on the skills needed to produce environmental and wildlife films that are intended to make a difference, much of what is covered you will find relevant to almost all agenda-driven documentary films, whether prime time TV specials, grass roots activist videos, PSAs or IMAX films. Students will research issues, create stories, find characters, pitch ideas, develop proposals and write treatments. They will learn how to sell films, attract an audience and distribute films. There will be extensive discussions on how to produce films ethically, on the connection between films and citizen activism, and on how to raise money to finance films.</p>		
<p>COMM-516: Topic - Masters of European Cinema A survey of major film movements and national cinematic styles of Europe. Students view the works of prominent directors and compare themes and objectives of European cinema to those of the classic Hollywood narrative film.</p>		
<p>COMM-517: History of Cross-Cultural Cinema Cross-cultural analysis of film and video, drawing primarily on examples of feature production from Asia, Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East and focusing on the theme of cultural and ethnic identity. Film and video viewings, papers, lectures, and discussion.</p>		
<p>COMM-520: History of Animation The history, theory, and practice of animating visual imagery, from Victorian motion toys to Disney and Hollywood's Golden Age to the contemporary boom in animation through</p>		

computer-assisted technology. Critical examination of animation as a vehicle of entertainment, education, commercial persuasion, and propaganda. Class projects demonstrate different animation techniques.		
COMM-527: History of Photography, From Camera to Computer A survey of the development of photographic imagery from its advent in the early nineteenth century through contemporary twentieth century work. Emphasis is on viewing work in Washington galleries and museums.		
COMM-558: Survey of American Cinema Origins and historical development of American cinema, specifically the theatrical feature-length fiction film from the nineteenth century to 1970. Hollywood films as mythic representations of the way Americans viewed themselves. Films are screened, discussed, and criticized. Screenings are scheduled in addition to class sessions.		
COMM-584: Film Technology and Practice Part of the AU Abroad Semester in Prague. Introduction to concepts in visual communication through the use of still picture, Hi-8 video, and 16mm non-sync sound film in color. Camera technology; exponents, studio lighting, editing and sound recording, accompanied by analytical screenings and site visits to labs, with a series of sessions with supervising directors, and script consultations. Students edit work-print and magnetic sound on final films.		
COMM-585: Directing Part of the AU Abroad Semester in Prague. Introduces student to the field of film directing through a series of seminars with the most important film directors in the Czech lands. The roots of film as art, casting, choosing a crew, directing for dramaturgical impact, large scenes and extras, the documentary and avant-garde, use of sound and counterpoint, directing the short film and problems of inspiration.		
COMM-586: History of Czech Cinema Part of the AU Abroad Semester in Prague. Through viewing and lectures by some of the most important films in the Czech lands, the course covers the areas of film history most notable to the development of film language in Bohemia: the influences of realism and neorealism, the Czech New Wave and its aftermath, the avant-garde, the animated film, the FAMU Film School Phenomenon, and the short film.		
<b>Producing Electives (To be selected in consultation with advisor)</b>		
COMM-516 Community Documentary Using new media tools, students work with community members to tell their stories, and assist in the production of 4-minute autobiographical digital stories using personal photographs, family and community archives, and recorded interviews. These digital stories, where the storyteller becomes the filmmaker, are used as prompts in meetings, hearings, on websites, etc. to build community, mobilize around community issues, and empower the storytellers themselves. As part of their training, students create their own digital stories.		
COMM-524: Producing Wildlife & Environmental Films : The Art of Producing In this course filmmakers write, produce, shoot, and edit a professional, 30-minute program with environmental and/or wildlife themes in partnership with a public broadcasting station. Academic, theoretic, and scientific research complement experiential learning. Students are assigned readings from text and on-line resources, write journals that reflect how this research influenced the execution of their assignments, attend lectures and seminars by professional filmmakers, and screen environmental films. Prerequisite COMM-634 or permission of instructor.		
COMM-550: Financing and Marketing Independent Productions The non-theatrical film, television, and video industries are multifaceted, dynamic, and enormously complex. This course teaches film and video producers how to finance and market their productions. The course examines different financing and cost recoupment mechanisms that programmers use in building their programming lineup. The focus is on contract production, co-production, and production acquisition as typical deal structures used by major programmers.		
COMM-569: Executive Suite A survey of the upper-echelon management of the entertainment, PR, and news media related fields. The class takes a close look at the people who determine movie, TV program, and web-based content, as well as the products consumers buy and why.		
COMM-571: Production Planning and Management How to administer and manage both large and small productions through script breakdown, stripboarding, scheduling, budgeting, location shooting, and dealing with unions and talent agents. Discussion of the field as a career, and how to apply business-like approaches to motion		

pictures, television programs, and videotape documentaries.		
COMM-601: Legal Aspects of Communication Current legal problems; theory of controls in journalism, visual communication, television, and radio; libel suits, copyrights, and infringement.		
COMM-574: Business of Television This course gives students a macro look at the prime-time network and cable television business and investigates the various players in the business including studios, networks, producers, agents, and advertisers. It examines the different roles and relationships in the development and production of television programming, including what makes a good idea for a television series; the role of the studios; the various economic models; the showrunner executive producer; how an agent works; why advertisers are so important; what the rating mean; and the future of television. Prerequisite: permission of school; open only to students in the weekend graduate program.		
COMM-672: Media Enterprise II, Managing the Enterprise This course follows COMM-671 and provides students with the knowledge necessary to manage a media production company. Includes cost and cash management, personnel, business communications, networking, negotiating, marketing, distribution of media products, the advantages and disadvantages of expansion, and knowing when to stay with or alter the business plan.		
COMM XXX (course number pending) Investigative Pub Affairs Doc Introduces students to the history of investigative, public affairs documentaries and the multi-layered skills required to produce investigative reports for the web and broadcast. This course focuses on the pre-production research, reporting and interviewing techniques required to get to production, as well as the building blocks to tell a compelling visual story. Students put these skills to use by participating in an investigative project.		
COMM-690: Independent Study Project in Communication (Worth 3 credits maximum)		
COMM-691: Graduate Internship (Worth 3 credits maximum) Professional communication work in an off-campus organization appropriate to the student's academic program.		
One media studies elective may be taken in a related department with the approval of the faculty advisor. Courses that generally fall into this group are:		
PERF-552: Directing Techniques A studio course providing training in the foundations of directing for the theatre by applying various directorial theories, forms of play analysis and types of staging to particular scripts.		
PERF-650: Rotating Topics in Theatre (Consult Advisor)		
PERF-665: Theatre History I, From the Greeks to the Renaissance The historical pattern of drama as an art form and the social function of the theatre from its earliest appearance through the Renaissance.		
PERF-666: Theatre History II, From Baroque to the End of the 19 <sup>th</sup> Century The historical pattern of drama as an art form and the social function of the theatre from the baroque to the present.		
LIT-646: Topics in Film (Consult Advisor)		
LIT-702: Creative Writing, Film Script May be repeated for credit, but not the same term. An introduction to writing developing stories for the screen. A study of the special contributions of the writer to film art. Screenings, reading, writing, and rewriting.		
<b>"Free" Elective Courses (up to 9 credits)</b>		
<b>Approved Elective</b>		
<b>Approved Elective</b>		
<b>Approved Elective</b>		


**Comprehensive Exam: All students must take and pass the Comprehensive Exam.**

<b>Comprehensive Exam: Film &amp; Electronic Media</b>		
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