Section C: Master of Fine Arts:
Graphic Design & Interactive Design Only

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MASTER OF FINE ARTS DEGREE IN DESIGN, GRAPHIC DESIGN TRACK

The Master of Fine Arts degree in Design, Graphic Design Track, focuses on design theory, process, and methods related to design practice and research. Potential areas of study include cross-cultural communication, visual representation of information, human interaction with designed objects, social and cultural implications of design, color systems and perception, design history, and design education. Students develop designed objects, experiences, and information resources that will enhance people’s lives. The program integrates theory with practice in the application of emergent and established technologies to design solutions.

Interactive Design Emphasis. The Master of Fine Arts degree in Design, Graphic Design Track, Interactive Design Emphasis offers study and applied practice in the design of the electronic environment. Students in this emphasis explore aspects of research and development in digital media, including World Wide Web design, interactive media, and digital presentations. The interaction between the user and the designed product is examined. Successfully completing coursework emphasizing design, research methods, theory, and philosophy prepares graduates for careers in digital design, teaching, and consulting.

The objectives of the M.F.A. degree are:
1. to provide students with coursework, projects, and experiences that prepare them for teaching and professional careers in graphic and interactive design.
2. to provide students with the opportunity to work under the direction of faculty in the development of graphic and interactive design projects.
3. to develop an educational format for the integration of creative production with analytical and critical thinking skills.

Coursework Required and Recommended

Each M.F.A. student’s program must include the following components basic to graduate education:

Major field:
- Theory/ Philosophy, 6 credits
- Evaluation and Analysis, 6 credits
- Concentration Area, 28 credits
- Capstone Project, 12 credits

Related field:
- Minor/Supporting Area, 8 credits
Please note that these credit amounts are the foundation level required; additional coursework may be required.

Program Policies Related to Coursework:

- Core Courses required of all Design graduate students:
  DES 8181 Research Ethics

Select one course from the following to fulfill core + one component:
- DES 8102 Quantitative Research Methods
- DES 8103 Qualitative & Mixed Methods Research
- DES 8112 Design Theory and Criticism
- DES 8113 Teaching and Assessment
- DES 8164 Innovation Theory and Analysis

- No more than 6 credits of Directed Studies and 6 credits of Readings may appear on a student’s program. Directed Studies and Readings courses require a contract; the student may obtain this contract from the receptionist of the department office. Once the contract has been completed and signed by the faculty adviser, the student returns to the receptionist for the magic number needed for registration.

- The number of 4xxx level credits on the official program of Design graduate students is not to exceed 9 credits. Not all 4xxx level courses are available for graduate credit.

- Internships are not accepted as coursework in the area of concentration.

- Design graduate students may have no more than 8 credits of incompletes on the official degree program at one time. The student is expected to meet with the adviser to discuss a plan to complete the incomplete credits. If the incompletes have not been removed within one year, a hold will be placed on the student’s record.

- Effective Spring 2014, registration for Grad 999 will be permitted for extenuating circumstances only.

- Master’s students are required by Graduate School to maintain a graduate GPA of 2.8 or better. If a student’s graduate GPA falls below 2.8, the student will have one semester to bring the graduate GPA up to 2.8 or above and maintain it at that level thereafter. A registration hold will be placed on the student’s record; the student and adviser will be notified of this hold placement. If the grades for the next semester do not bring the GPA up to 2.8 or the cumulative GPA falls below 2.8 a second time, the student will not be eligible to continue in the program.
Preparing Future Faculty

The Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) program provides a teaching and learning forum for graduate students and post-doctoral fellows at the University of Minnesota. Program participants discuss learning theory and strategies, develop teaching and assessment skills, create classroom and job search materials, and work with faculty from regional institutions.

If you are interested in participating in this program, contact your faculty adviser or the Director of Graduate Studies. For more information, visit the PPF website at http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/graduate/pff/.
**Courses Recommended for the M.F.A., Graphic Design Track:**

**MAJOR PROGRAM AREA:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory &amp; Philosophy</th>
<th>6 credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consult with adviser.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation &amp; Analysis</th>
<th>6 credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDes 5388</td>
<td>Design Planning, Analysis, Evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Select one course from:*

| DES 8102 | Quantitative Research Methods | 3 |
| DES 8103 | Qualitative & Mixed Methods Research | 3 |

**Concentration**

*required:*

| DES 8114 | Design Studio | 4 |
| DES 8181 | Research Ethics (or equivalent) | 1 |
| GDes 8361 | Color, Design, & Human Perception | 3 |
| GDes 8362 | The Nature of Representation in Visual Communication | 3 |

*select from:*

| GDes 4131 | History of Visual Communication | 4 |
| GDes 4330 | Surface Design Workshop | 4 |
| GDes 4343 | Data Visualization I | 3 |
| GDes 4345 | Advanced Typography | 4 |
| GDes 4350 | Advanced Design Material Topics | 3 |
| GDes 4352 | Design Process: Bookmaking | 3 |
| GDes 5311 | Illustration | 3 |
| GDes 5343 | Data Visualization II | 3 |

*Other courses selected with adviser and committee approval.*

**Creative Project**

| GDes 8990 | MFA Creative Thesis | 12 |

**RELATED FIELD:**

*8 credits minimum*

| Courses and/or a minor are selected in consultation with adviser | 8 |

Suggested fields include Architecture, Art, Art History, Computer Science, Curriculum & Instruction, Journalism & Mass Communication, Philosophy, Psychology, Rhetoric, Speech Communication. If a minor is declared, the student contacts the Director of Graduate Studies of the minor program for information regarding requirements.
Courses Recommended for the M.F.A., Graphic Design Track, Interactive Design Emphasis:

**MAJOR PROGRAM AREA:**

**Theory & Philosophy**  
*required:*
- GDes 5399 Theory of Electronic Design 3  
  Consult with adviser.

**Evaluation & Analysis**  
- GDes 5388 Graphic Design Research 3  
  *Select one course from:*
- DES 8102 Quantitative Research Methods 3  
- DES 8103 Qualitative & Mixed Methods Research 3

**Concentration**  
*required:*
- DES 8114 Design Studio 4  
- DES 8181 Research Ethics (or equivalent) 1  
  *select from:*
- GDes 4343 Data Visualization I 3  
- GDes 5341 Interactive Design 3  
- GDes 5342 Web and Interface Design 3  
- GDes 5343 Data Visualization II 3  
- GDes 5383 Digital Illustration & Animation 4  
- GDes 5386 Fundamentals of Game Design 3  
- GDes 8361 Color, Design, & Human Perception 3  
- GDes 8362 The Nature of Representation in Visual Communication 3  
  *Other courses selected with adviser and committee approval.*

**Creative Project**  
*12 credits minimum*
- GDes 8990 MFA Creative Thesis 12

**RELATED FIELD:**  
*8 credits minimum*
- Courses and/or a minor are selected in consultation with adviser 8

Suggested fields include Architecture, Art, Art History, Computer Science, Curriculum & Instruction, Journalism & Mass Communication, Philosophy, Psychology, Rhetoric, Speech Communication. If a minor is declared, the student contacts the Director of Graduate Studies of the minor program for information regarding requirements.
Projected Time Table

All requirements for the master of fine arts degree must be completed and the degree awarded within five years. The five-year period begins with the earliest work included on the official degree program, including any transfer work.

To maintain active status, graduate students must register Fall and Spring semesters until the degree has been conferred.

Selection of Adviser and Committee

Graduate students are assigned an adviser upon admission into the program; track faculty carefully determine the best fit. Adviser assignments are based on the student’s area of interest and the availability of advisers. Students may choose to change advisers once they become familiar with faculty and their expertise. With the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies, students have the option of changing advisers if the new adviser is available and willing. See “Guidelines for Change of Adviser” for the process. Master’s student advisers must be members of the graduate faculty at the Member/Advising or Senior Member level.

An examining committee is formed by the student in consultation with the adviser. A minimum of three committee members must be selected: two from Design (one of whom is the student’s adviser), and one from the supporting area or minor field. Students should discuss appropriate examining committee members with their advisers, then make an appointment to ask the proposed committee members if they would be willing and available to serve on the examining committee.

Another track within the Design Graduate Program may be selected as a related field or supporting area of study, but not as a declared minor. Outside examiners must be associated with a track other than the student’s.

Some faculty may be designated for more than one track; in this case, the Director of Graduate Studies will ensure that the external committee member is solely representative of the other track when approving the Degree Program.

An approved degree program must be on file before the student is permitted to schedule the final examination.
Guidelines for Change of Adviser

1. Any member of the graduate faculty can refer students interested in changing their advisers to the DGS, or students can approach the DGS directly to discuss a change of adviser.
2. The student meets with the DGS to express interest in changing adviser.
3. The DGS contacts the new adviser to determine adviser availability and willingness to advise.
4. The DGS notifies former adviser of change.
5. The DGS notifies Graduate Program Assistant of change, who then submits appropriate forms to document the change.

Change in Committee Members form is on the Design Graduate Program Forms and Links page: http://dha.design.umn.edu/programs/grad/FormsandLinks.html

Academic Progress Annual Evaluation for Graduate Students

Each academic year graduate students are evaluated in terms of their academic performance and progress toward obtaining a graduate degree. While Graduate School will notify the Director of Graduate Studies and the academic advisor if the student’s grade point average falls below the minimum required (2.8), Graduate School requires that additional feedback be given to graduate students concerning their academic performance. The purpose of the evaluation is to provide students with timely feedback concerning their academic progress, and, in cases where the graduate students’ academic progress is unsatisfactory, to initiate a process by which students can be assisted in making progress toward obtaining their degrees.

In cases where students may need to reapply to the Graduate School in order to progress on their degree work, additional coursework may be required or adjustments may need to be made to their research project to reflect the changing nature of the field. Lack of academic progress jeopardizes a student’s status in Graduate School.

Students are evaluated by their academic adviser(s). Once the student has conferred with the adviser, the evaluation form is to be completed and forwarded to the Director of Graduate Studies. Students who are informed that they are not making academic progress will meet with adviser(s) and submit an action plan for successful completion of their degrees.

Procedure:
Students will be sent the evaluation document via e-mail in early January and will make an appointment to meet with their adviser before February 1. **It is the student's responsibility to set up this appointment.**

Students bring the following to the meeting:
- Current Transcript
- Degree Completion Checklist

Once the student has met with the adviser, the form will be completed and signed. The original document will be filed in the student’s permanent file.

All students will be notified whether they are or are not making academic progress.

Student who are notified that they are not making academic progress will:

1. Schedule an appointment within 2 weeks of the notification with their academic adviser.

2. Present a plan for making academic progress on their degree during that appointment.

The form follows.
All Evaluations must be completed and submitted to the DGS by February 1.

Academic Progress Annual Evaluation for Graduate Students
Design Graduate Program

Evaluation Criteria:

- Grade Point Average (3.0 in program courses)
- Confers regularly with academic advisor
  - Planning: degree program
  - Degree plan filed?
    - If not, file by this date: ________________
  - Meeting degree milestones (e.g., filing degree programs, passing written exams)
  - Goals: Setting and meeting
  - On-going communication with academic advisors (e.g., degree progress, needs)
- Registering for degree program coursework
  (to accomplish degree in recommended time frame, full-time graduate students should be registered for 6-9 degree program credits per semester.)
- Making progress on Thesis/Dissertation while registering for credit
- Presentations, Publications, Exhibitions:

Other comments:

Student signature ______________________________

Advisor signature ______________________________  Date ____________
Transfer of Credits

A minimum of 60% of total course credits (not including thesis credits) required for a specific master’s degree must be taken at the University. Transferred credits can include a maximum of 12 graduate course credits taken as non-degree seeking or non-admitted status. Transfer of thesis credits is not allowed.

For more information regarding transfer of credits, consult the University of Minnesota Policy: http://www.policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/GRADCREDITDEGREE.html

Possible Minors and Related Fields

Suggested fields include Architecture, Art, Art History, Computer Science, Curriculum & Instruction, Journalism & Mass Communication, Philosophy, Psychology, Rhetoric, and Speech Communication. Appropriate minors and coursework in related fields should be discussed with your faculty adviser.

Filing the Graduate Degree Plan

By the middle of the third semester, students must file a Graduate Degree Plan. Students list all coursework, completed and proposed, that will be completed in fulfillment of degree requirements, including transfer work. The members of a student’s examining committee are recommended by the graduate faculty at the time the student’s degree program is approved.

Program Policy: The graduate student will develop the degree plan in consultation with and in a meeting with Design members of the committee, who will then sign the Design Program Approval Form.

Students meet with their advisers and committee members to discuss their program of study prior to filing the Graduate Degree Plan. Four forms, all of which are obtainable from the Design Graduate Program website, are completed in the process of filing the degree plan:

- The completed “Coursework Planning & Clearance Sheet” to indicate which courses are being used to fulfill program components.
- “Program Approval Form” (signed by all Design members of the student’s committee to indicate that all committee members approve of the proposed coursework)
• “Graduate Degree Plan”, an interactive form:  
  http://policy.umn.edu/forms/otr/otr198.pdf

All committee members must be identified prior to filing the degree program.

The Program Approval Form signed by the committee and a copy of the Coursework Planning and Clearance Sheet are submitted with the Graduate Degree Plan to the graduate program assistant, who reviews the documents for compliance with University and program policies. The Director of Graduate Studies signs the Graduate Degree Plan, and students and their advisers are sent .pdf files of the signed documents. The graduate program assistant then forwards the documents to Graduate Student Services and Progress.

Program Policy: A hold will be placed on a student’s record if no degree program is filed by the middle of the third semester.

Please note that a hold on the student’s record prevents the student from registering for classes. Registration is required to maintain active status and to hold an assistantship.

Online Submission of Committee Members

Effective Fall 2012, students are responsible for submitting the committee information online. Internal approval processes and guidelines must be followed prior to the online submission.  
http://www.grad.umn.edu/students/examiningcommitteesnew/index.html

Creative Thesis Completion Procedures

Graduate students set up a schedule with the adviser for the completion of the creative thesis.

Graduation Packet

After the Degree Program has been filed and approved by Graduate School, the student may request a Graduation Packet online:  
http://www.grad.umn.edu/current-students-graduate-student-services-progress/masters

Select “Graduation Packet Request".
The Graduation Packet contains important information such as graduation instructions and the Application for Degree form.

Policies Related to Research

For more information about research involving human subjects: http://www.research.umn.edu/subjects

Changing Approved Program

Once approved, the degree program must be fulfilled in every detail to meet graduation requirements. Changes in the approved program must be requested with an online active form, Petition (GS 59): http://policy.umn.edu/forms/otr/otr190.pdf

Preparation of M.F.A. Paper

Although the Master of Fine Arts does not require a thesis, the accompanying paper should follow the same guidelines as the Master's Thesis. Thesis Formatting and Submission

Program Copies of M.F.A. Projects

Program Policy: M.F.A. papers and Plan B master’s papers may be reviewed only on the premises. See the graduate program assistant.

GDes 8990: M.F.A. Creative Thesis

GDes 8990: M.F.A. Creative Thesis is a two semester course sequence. The student registers for six credits per semester, under the guidance of the adviser. This is the course during which students complete the creative project.

This two-semester sequence provides the framework for M.F.A. students to propose, research, design, and produce their M.F.A. thesis projects. The M.F.A. project demonstrates the student’s ability to design and produce quality design communication.
Both semesters enable the students to focus on the two parts of the M.F.A. Thesis:

1. Project development through proposal, research, literature and design review, project outline, prototype development, initial design production, and completed design production and presentation.

2. A written thesis, which includes a project description, analysis, and evaluation of the effectiveness of the designed project in the form of a written publication.

Guidelines related to the project and paper are available from the student’s academic adviser.

**Changes in the Examining Committee**

Substitutions on the examining committee may be necessitated by such circumstances as a faculty member’s temporary absence or leave from the University. Internal approval processes and guidelines must be followed prior to the online submission. Change in Committee Members form is on the Design Graduate Program Forms and Links page: [http://dha.design.umn.edu/programs/grad/FormsandLinks.html](http://dha.design.umn.edu/programs/grad/FormsandLinks.html)

Once approved, the student is responsible for entering the committee changes via an online system: [http://www.grad.umn.edu/current-students-graduate-student-services-progress/examining-committees-new](http://www.grad.umn.edu/current-students-graduate-student-services-progress/examining-committees-new)

**Master of Fine Arts, Graphic Design Track: Final Oral Examination**

The final oral examination covers the major field and the minor or related fields, and may include any work fundamental to these fields. Students should make the project available to the examining committee for its review well in advance of the final examination. The final oral examination is conducted as a closed examination, attended by only the student and the examining committee. All committee members must be present; the absence of any member results in an invalid examination.

Program Policy: No food is to be served at oral examinations. Coffee or water may be provided by the adviser.
Thesis Binding

Two bound copies of your Plan B Paper go to the program: one to your major adviser, one to the graduate program assistant for the program archives.

Adviser and Program Copies of Project & Paper

Two bound copies of the project and paper are provided to the program; one copy goes to the adviser; the other copy goes to the graduate program assistant for the program archives.
CHANGE OF STATUS/CHANGE OF DEGREE OBJECTIVE

Graduate Admissions Office Change of Status information is located here: http://www.grad.umn.edu/admissions/cos

In addition to the forms required by Graduate School Admissions, the Design Graduate Program requires the following:

- submission of a revised goal statement for the degree level desired
- submission of 1-2 updated letters of recommendation
- submission of plan for completing master's degree, signed by the adviser
- portfolio, if appropriate for the track
- writing sample, if change is to Ph.D.

Program Policy: The master's degree must be completed within one term of the semester for which the change of status takes place.

Please note: Program deadlines for the change of status request are as posted on the Design Graduate Program website.

A Change of Status packet is available from the graduate program assistant, or via the Design Graduate Program Website in a .pdf file.

Once the forms have been completed and submitted to the Graduate Admissions Office, the Admissions office sends the program an Admission Appraisal Form (GS25) to be completed and returned.

The Track faculty meet to discuss the request for change of status and notify the graduate program assistant of the results.

Forms are signed by the DGS and returned to the Graduate Admissions Office indicating the program’s recommendation. The Graduate Admissions office notifies the student of the final decision.

Change of Degree Objective.

Use the same document as change of status and follow the same guidelines.

Change of Track within Design Graduate Program

Use the same document as change of status and follow the same guidelines.