

CINEMATIC ARTS, MFA

Overview

The Master of Fine Arts in Cinematic Arts is designed for passionate and ambitious students eager to explore filmmaking as an artistic practice. This program nurtures creativity, critical dialogue, and professional growth, providing the guidance and resources you need to develop your unique artistic voice.

From day one, you'll benefit from personalized mentorship—not only from your major thesis advisor but also from the entire graduate faculty and your cohort of peers. Our community is deeply collaborative, fostering connections that inspire and elevate your creative journey.

Choosing an MFA in Cinematic Arts through the Department of Film, Video, Animation & New Genres means becoming part of a welcoming and supportive community—one that values artistic exploration, research critical inquiry, formal explorations, innovative storytelling, and engagement with contemporary film art. We look forward to supporting you and your creative research.

Request Info (<https://uwm.edu/arts/request-information/>) | Visit (<https://uwm.edu/arts/visit/>) | Apply (<https://uwm.edu/arts/apply/>)

Faculty and Staff

Our inspirational faculty and staff make sure students feel welcome and empowered to think outside the box and explore all possibilities of making art at UWM. Visit the Peck School of the Arts directory (<https://uwm.edu/arts/directory/>) to meet these artists, explore their biographies and engage with recent work.

Scholarships and Aid

Financial constraints shouldn't hinder your artistic dreams. Our comprehensive range of scholarships and aid programs (<https://uwm.edu/arts/students/scholarships-aid/>) is designed to empower and support artists like you.

Study Abroad

We believe that a complete education in the arts should take you beyond the classroom and the local community. By studying abroad, you'll gain more than a change of scenery. You'll embark on a transformative educational experience and bring a global perspective to your field of study. Explore upcoming trips (<https://uwmilwaukee.studioabroad.com/?FuseAction=Programs.AdvancedSearch>) offered in partnership with the Center for International Education.

Admission Requirements

Graduate applicants must meet general Graduate School admission requirements (<https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/students/admission/>) in addition to specific program requirements found on the Peck School of the Arts apply page (<https://uwm.edu/arts/apply/#tab-bqoh-graduate>).

To learn more, request a remote audio or video appointment (<https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/request-an-appointment/>) with the UWM Graduate School.

Application Deadlines

Application deadlines vary by program, please review the application deadline chart (<http://uwm.edu/graduateschool/program-deadlines/>) for

specific programs. Other important dates and deadlines can be found by using the One Stop calendars (<https://uwm.edu/onestop/dates-and-deadlines/>).

Admission

In order to be considered for admission to the program, an applicant must meet Graduate School requirements, submit a reason statement as well as submit original media-related work that demonstrates technical competence and creative promise.

An applicant whose grade point average or quality of work does not meet Graduate School and Department of Film, Video, Animation and New Genres program standards may be considered for admission on probation. Each student is expected to satisfy deficiency requirements within three enrolled semesters. The Graduate School and the Department of Film, Video, Animation and New Genres graduate program monitor the deficiencies. No course credits earned to make up deficiencies may be counted as program credits required for the degree.

Transfer of Credits

With the approval of the Department of Film, Video, Animation and New Genres graduate program and the Graduate School, an applicant from another institution may be permitted to transfer up to 19 credits toward the total of 48 graduate credits required for the MFA degree.

Individual Peck School of the Arts graduate advisors are assigned upon admission. Your advisor will work closely with you during your time here. To connect with your graduate program representative, please visit the Graduate tab on the Peck School of the Arts apply page (<https://uwm.edu/arts/apply/>).

Master of Fine Arts in Cinematic Arts

In addition to a series of graduate seminars, students can choose from an array of elective options that include graduate production studios, conceptual studies courses, complementary studies from outside the department, professional practice opportunities in the field and U/G or G electives. Students are expected to originate and produce finished projects on a regular basis, culminating in a thesis presentation.

Credits and Courses

The minimum Film-MFA degree requirement is 48 graduate credits, (18 cr required, 30 cr elective). It is recommended that students earn 12 credits each semester through full-time attendance on campus.

Code	Title	Credits
Required		
FILM 710	Graduate Film Studio/Seminar I	3
FILM 712	Graduate Film Studio/Seminar II	3
FILM 714	Graduate Film Studio/Seminar III	3
FILM 730	Advanced Research in Film I	3
FILM 732	Advanced Research in Film II	6
Electives		
Select 30 credits with assistance and approval from the Director of Graduate Studies and their Graduate Advisor.		30
FILM 720	Graduate Media Arts Workshop I ¹	
FILM 722	Graduate Media Arts Workshop II ¹	
FILM 761	Landscape Cinema	
FILM 763	Experimental Documentary	
FILM 764	Observational Documentary	

FILM 781	Advanced 16MM Film Production
FILM 782	Visual Effects
FILM 900	Graduate Studio (maximum of 12 credits)
Department of Film, Video, Animation and New Genres Electives (maximum of 30 credits) ²	
Complementary Studies (maximum of 9 credits) ³	
FILM 700	Professional Practice: Production (maximum of 9 credits)
Total Credits	48

¹ A maximum of 14 credits between FILM 720 and FILM 722.

² These are U/G and G classes in film, video & new genres that are regularly offered by the department, including topics such as 16mm film and video production, screenwriting, lighting, cinematography, audio production, animation, installation, performance and physical computing.

³ These are UG/G courses offered outside the department that are relevant to a student's proposed course of study. If courses inside the Department of Film, Video, Animation and New Genres are closely allied to an area of complementary study, such as Film courses in audio or photography and Music Department courses in electronic composition, they will count toward fulfillment of the Complementary Studies option. Students interested in Complementary Studies are encouraged to discuss their options with the Director of Graduate Studies and their major professor before enrolling in these courses.

Additional Requirements

Major Professor as Advisor

Each student chooses a major professor from the Department of Film, Video, Animation and New Genres graduate faculty to advise and supervise studies. In addition to the major professor, each student's committee must contain a minimum of two Department of Film, Video, Animation and New Genres graduate faculty members. Any student electing a minimum of nine credits in either Conceptual or Complementary Studies must include a faculty member from that discipline on the committee as well.

Thesis Presentation

Upon recommendation of the major professor and advisory faculty, the student presents a thesis exhibition program of work executed since admission to the program. The exhibition may be held either during the semester in which the student completes coursework for the degree or during the following semester.

Time Limit

The student must complete all degree requirements within seven years of the initial enrollment.

International Students

On completion of graduate studies, international students are eligible to apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT) for an additional year of practical work experience. If you are interested in OPT, please see an Immigration Coordinator at International Student and Scholar Services in the Center for International Education.

Cinematic Arts, MFA Learning Outcomes

Students graduating with the MFA in Cinematic Arts will be able to:

- Synthesize and grow existing knowledge of artistic principles, conventions, methods, and practices through creating and producing films and/or moving image works of art.
- Conceive, develop, produce, and revise an original and substantive thesis project.
- Apply critical and creative thinking skills in a variety of contexts.
- Analyze the relationship between film and other art forms and intellectual disciplines.
- Communicate effectively, in a style appropriate to the discipline; produce projects individually and collaboratively; and engage fully in the entire production process, from concept to distribution.
- Show commitment to personal and professional development through engagement in professional exhibitions, festivals, and related opportunities within the field.
- As a Teaching Assistant, exhibit mastery of course material, lead effective discussions, evaluate student work and provide constructive feedback, and engage in professional and timely communication and conduct.

Policies & Regulations

Please review the Graduate School policies and regulations (<https://catalog.uwm.edu/policies/graduate-policies/>) and refer to each specific program for any additional items.

Contact Information

Advising & Student Services
Theatre Building, Room 120

<https://uwm.edu/arts/contact/>