

2021

**MA GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK**

DEPARTMENT OF  
MEDIA ARTS  
College of Liberal Arts  
& Social Sciences

**UNT**<sup>®</sup>  
**EST. 1890**

Approved by the Media Arts Graduate  
Curriculum Committee Spring 2021

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## Requirements for Master of Arts Degree in Media Arts

The MA degree requires the completion of at least 30 hours of graduate course work and successful completion of either a thesis or comprehensive exam. A student may also elect 6-12 hours in a minor area.

### Degree plan

Upon completing 9 hours in the MA program, students must submit a Degree Plan for approval by the departmental graduate advisor and the graduate school. Once filed, any changes to the degree plan must be approved by the graduate advisor and resubmitted to the graduate school for approval.

### Course Requirements

The Master's degree has two pathways: Critical/Cultural Studies and Media Industry Studies. Both pathways have the options to complete a thesis or comprehensive exam.

#### Critical/Cultural Studies Pathway

Critical/Cultural Studies students must take:

1. MRTS 5120 – Critical-Cultural Media Theory
2. MRTS 5121 – Digital Media Studies
3. At least 9 additional hours of Critical/Cultural Studies courses
4. An additional 9-12 hours of elective courses that can include up to:
  - i. 6 hours from graduate courses in other departments at UNT as approved by the graduate advisor
  - ii. 3 hours practicum OR 3 hours internship
  - iii. 3 hours special problems
5. Capstone: completion of a thesis (6 hours) or exam (3 hours)

#### Media Industry Studies Pathway

Media Industry Studies students must take:

1. MRTS 5125 – Media Industry Studies
2. MRTS 5120 – Critical-Cultural Media Theory OR MRTS 5121 – Digital Media Studies (can take both, one counts as an elective)
3. At least 9 additional hours of Industry Studies courses
4. An additional 9-12 hours of elective courses that can include up to:
  - i. 6 credit hours from graduate courses in other departments at UNT as approved by the graduate advisor
  - ii. 3 hours practicum OR 3 hours internship
  - iii. 3 hours special problems
5. Capstone: completion of a thesis (6 hours) or exam (3 hours)

## Curriculum

Course offerings differ each semester; check the course catalog for available courses. Course information for the following semester is posted on the bulletin board and online as soon as it is available.

*You must meet with the Graduate Advisor each semester to obtain course codes for enrollment.*

### Courses applicable to both pathways:

**MRTS 5121. Digital Media Studies.** 3 hours. Examination of emerging theoretical approaches to mass media. Application to digital media and traditional film and television of qualitative methodologies based on concepts including: participatory culture, community, mobility, network theory, labor economies, and globalization.

**MRTS 5900. Special Problems.** Individual Study topics to be proposed by the student and approved by MRTS faculty and department chair prior to commencing work.

**MRTS 5180. Internship in Media Arts.** 1-3 hours. Supervised off-campus work experience in a placement that relates to student's career objective.

**MRTS 5480. Practicum in the Teaching of Media Arts.** 3 hours. Training in the teaching of some aspect of radio, television or film. Under the supervision of a faculty member, the student prepares and presents instructional units, conducts class discussions and handles administrative matters peculiar to the type of course involved.

### Critical Cultural Studies Courses

**MRTS 5120. Critical-Cultural Media Theory.** 3 hours. Introduces students to various theoretical frameworks used to study radio, television, and film. Provides students with a historical development of media theory, as well as the vocabulary and concepts germane to different methodologies.

**MRTS 5220. Post-War European Film.** 3 hours. Examines three major film movements that developed in Europe after WWII: Italian Neorealism, the French New Wave, and British New Wave. Identifies the historical and cultural influences behind these film movements and explores the aesthetics of each movement and how these aesthetics reflect the philosophical and/or political ideals of the filmmakers.

**MRTS 5240. Hitchcock Films.** 3 hours. Focuses on films directed by Alfred Hitchcock tracking the development of Hitchcock's career from the early days in Britain through his studio successes in America. Detailed analyses of specific Hitchcock films and engagement with the various debates about authorship, genre, psychoanalysis and film which have been staged in relation to Hitchcock's work.

**MRTS 5340. History of the Documentary.** 3 hours. An overview of the history of the documentary from 1895 to the present in the context of historical and political events of the time. Examines the evolution of style and form and the impact of production technology on the process.

**MRTS 5780. Contemporary Documentary.** 3 hours. Students in this course will engage with a variety of

theoretical debates related to contemporary documentary. The first half of the course will involve guided reading, written responses and class discussion. The second half will be divided amongst class participants to view and discuss contemporary works in light of these and other appropriate theoretical debates.

**MRTS 5420. African-American Film.** 3 hours. Advanced study of the representation of African-American characters and concerns throughout the history of American film, drawing on current concepts from historiography, spectatorship, and critical race theory. Explores the cultural context of historical and contemporary images, as well as African- American participation within the American film industry.

**MRTS 5430. Gender and Sexuality in the Horror Film.** 3 hours. Advanced study of gender and sexuality as it has been figured throughout the history of the American horror film, drawing on genre theory, psychoanalysis, feminism and queer theory. Explores the cultural context of historical and contemporary images, charting their change vis-à-vis major historical events such as World War II, the Sexual Revolution and the AIDS crisis.

**MRTS 5435. Lesbian, Gay and Queer Film and Video.** 3 hours. Advanced study of the representation of lesbian, gay and queer characters and concerns throughout the history of American film, drawing upon recent advances in historiography, spectatorship and queer theory. Explores the cultural context of historical and contemporary images, charting their change across relevant historical events such as World War II, the Sexual Revolution, the AIDS crisis and the mainstreaming of queer concerns in the 1990s.

**MRTS 5515. Media/Genre Authors.** 3 hours. An in-depth study of a specific genre in film or television from its origins through its development as a distinct narrative and aesthetic form. Topics have included the films of Federico Fellini, Women in Film, British Cinema, The Western, International Documentary, Anthropological Film.

**MRTS 5750. Cinema/Video Vérité.** 3 hours. Examines the development of this major style in documentary film and video from its introduction in 1960 to its present use in nonfiction film and television. Outlines its history in detail and explores its employment in reality television, fiction film and television drama.

**MRTS 5400. Media Studies Seminar.** 3 hours. In-depth studies of media—rotating topics including Teen Media, Gender & Digital Cultures, Video Game Perspectives, Community Media Education.

### **Industry Studies Courses**

**MRTS 5125. Media Industry Studies.** 3 hours. Introduction to how media industries work, why they work as they do, and the broader theoretical and practical implications of media industry structure and function. Provides students with research methods and critical frameworks for graduate study of the media industry.

**MRTS 5460. Global Media.** 3 hours. Study of mass communication media throughout the world, with special attention to news and broadcast systems, the sources and flow of international news, and problems of world communications.

**MRTS5620. Media Economics.** 3 hours. Analysis of the economic parameters of the current and past media industries, particularly film, television and the cable industries. Includes study of the history and development of the film and subsequent media industries.

**MRTS 5630. Broadcast Programming.** 3 hours. Theories and strategies of program selection, scheduling and evaluation for broadcast stations and cable television systems.

**MRTS 5640. Media Management.** 3 hours. The fundamental management theories and practices in the areas of personnel, financial, marketing, legal, and technical aspects of broadcast station, cable television, and digital media systems.

**MRTS 5680. Media Entrepreneurship.** 3 hours. This course covers the essential information needed to start a media business. Among the topics covered are how to identify and market a new media enterprise, legal and tax issues encountered with starting a new business, and cost structures and sources of startup capital. A key outcome of this class will be the preparation of a business plan for a new media-related startup.

**MRTS 5350. Television News Producing.** 3 hours. Theory and practice of producing television newscasts in a station environment. Students have the opportunity to produce newscasts for North Texas Television (NTTV), UNT's cable access station. Students also have the responsibility of working with reporter/photographer teams as field producers and special project producers and to work with assignment editors and in content development with faculty advisor and news director.

**MRTS5660. Industry Studies Topics.** 3 hours. Rotating topics in industry studies including Audience Research, Digital Distribution, HBO, Law and Regulation, Media Ethics.

**MRTS 5180. Internship in Media Arts.** 1-3 hours. Supervised off-campus work experience in a placement that relates to student's career objective.

### **Transfer Credits**

The Department of Media Arts follows the policies and guidelines of the Toulouse School of Graduate Studies. Subject to the approval of the graduate dean and the Media Arts department, a student who holds a bachelor's degree and has been admitted to the Toulouse School of Graduate Studies and the Media Arts MA program at UNT, may apply up to 9 semester hours of graduate credit toward the degree.

### **Capstone Options**

After completion of 9 credit hours in the program students will discuss the thesis and exam options with the Graduate Advisor.

*Thesis Option: 24 hours course credits + 6 hours thesis credits = 30 hours*

The thesis option is especially appropriate for students wishing to pursue a PhD after completing the MA or for students wishing to work in research positions in the field, but it is open to all students. If the student chooses the thesis option, they must establish a thesis committee and successfully write and defend a thesis. Students are eligible to enroll in thesis hours after completing a minimum of 18

credit hours.

Once the student selects the thesis option, establishes their committee, and enrolls in thesis hours, a student is no longer eligible for the exam option in the program.

Details of thesis requirements, committee formation, and expected schedule of work is explained later in this handbook.

*Exam Option: 27 hours course credits + 3 hours exam credits = 30 hours*

If a student chooses the exam option, they must establish an exam committee and pass a comprehensive written exam. Students must complete a minimum of 21 hours of graduate credit before they are eligible to enroll in exam credits. Exams must be taken in the student's final semester.

Once the student selects the exam option, establishes their committee, and enrolls in exam hours, a student is no longer eligible for the thesis option in the program.

Details of exam requirements, committee formation, and expected schedule of work is explained later in this handbook.

### **Time Limits and Progress toward the Degree**

The following policies ensure students maintain the expected progress toward the degree.

1. Students must enroll in Media Arts classes within one year of being admitted into the MA program.
2. Students must also enroll in at least one course each year that will count toward their MA degree.
3. Students have one year after completing their coursework on their MA degree to take comprehensive exams or defend their thesis proposal. Students who fail one or more sections of the comprehensive exams must retake the exams the following semester. Students have one year after defending their thesis proposal to defend the final version of their completed thesis.

Students who fail to meet the above requirements will be dismissed from the MA program. Students who are dismissed under this policy may provide a written appeal to the departmental Graduate Committee for consideration. The decision to reinstate a student after dismissal is solely at the discretion of the departmental Graduate Committee. Students who violate the above policies twice will be dismissed from the MA program without further recourse within the department.

All requirements for the MA degree must be completed within 5 years. While it is possible to request a one-year time extension through the Toulouse Graduate School, the Department of Media Arts typically does not grant extension requests. Students who fail to complete all requirements for the MA degree within 5 years will be dismissed from the program without recourse within the department.

### **Maintaining Good Academic Standing**

Graduate students are expected to meet high standards of academic performance. *The graduate*

*committee in the Department of Media Arts will recommend dismissal of a student from the program if the student receives two course grades of "C" or below.* If the departmental graduate committee recommends the dismissal of a student under this policy, the student may provide a written appeal to the departmental graduate committee for consideration. The decision to reinstate a student is solely at the discretion of the departmental graduate committee. If a student who is reinstated receives a third grade of "C" or below, the student will be dismissed from the program without further recourse within the department.

### **Assistantships**

All MA students in good academic standing are eligible to apply for assistantships offered through the Department of Media Arts. Positions are determined on a semester-to-semester basis and are not guaranteed; students seeking an assistantship must submit an application each semester. Applications are available the department website. Offers take into consideration many variables including funding availability, departmental needs, student status, and prior performance.

Assistantships are paid positions with high expectations of work ethic and performance. Students who do not meet the expectations of faculty or fail to work the required hours a week may not be eligible for reinstatement of appointments. Assistantship decisions are made by the department Chair in consultation with the Graduate Advisors.

Students should note that Toulouse Graduate School requires students to be enrolled in 9-hours of graduate courses to be eligible for an assistantship. The MA degree only requires 30 hours, which means you do not have to enroll full-time for four semesters to complete the degree in two years. However, if you wish to pursue an assistantship, you can enroll in additional elective courses or pursue a minor to meet the minimum 9-hour requirement for assistantships.

### **Travel funding**

The Department of Media Arts has limited funding available to support graduate students who are invited to present at a conference or who wish to request research-related travel expenses. Students who are presenting at a conference must submit an application to the Graduate Director and provide proof of acceptance and expenses. Research-related travel requests (e.g. travel to an archive or interview) must be submitted with a justification of trip and the expenses. Funding decisions are made at the discretion of the Graduate Committee and are subject to availability.



## MA Comprehensive Exam Procedures and Timeline

**Master's Exams Defined.** The comprehensive examination is a test of the student's understanding of the central tenets of the field of media arts and studies. Examinations are designed to determine the extent to which the student has mastered the theories and skills necessary for the degree and is a test of the student's ability to describe, explain, analyze, and evaluate concepts in media arts and studies. Students are expected to demonstrate a broad knowledge of the discipline, but the exact content of the exam and its subsequent assessment will depend on the student's pathway and specializations.

**Graduate Exam Committee.** The Exam Committee will be made of three members: the Major Professor and two other graduate faculty members from Media Arts. **You must take at least one class with each of your committee members.** This will enable you to answer an exam question derived from the courses you have taken with each member of your committee. The Major Professor has the discretion to write a question based on a course you have taken with them and/or a synthesizing question that ties together your coursework.

**Scope of the Major Professor.** Your Major Professor must be a member of the Media Arts graduate faculty and will assist you in direct preparation of your exams. You must take at least one course from your major professor, however it is strongly advised you take at least two courses with them when possible. No faculty member is required to serve on a particular committee and may decline membership due to other work commitments, lack of expertise in the proposed area of interest, or other reasons.

*It is your responsibility, after you have consulted with the department's Graduate Advisor, to get the consent of an eligible faculty member to serve as your Major Professor and to determine in advance that the faculty member will be on campus during the exam.*

***You CANNOT enroll in exam hours without approval from your Major Professor.***

The responsibility of the Major Professor is to guide the student in his/her work; however it is the responsibility of the student to adequately prepare, organize, and obtain the appropriate resources necessary for the exam. Should a student require extra assistance preparing for the exam, they should consult their Major Professor to clarify concepts or theories; however it is not the responsibility of the Major Professor to re-teach material already covered in courses. Students are encouraged to work in conjunction with the library reference staff as appropriate.

**Modifications to Graduate Exam Committee.** Students should be aware that the replacement of Committee members should take place only in exceptional circumstances and always in consultation with your Major Professor. Once a Graduate Exam Committee has been approved and a Degree Plan has been filed with the Graduate School, any changes to the Exam Committee must be approved by the Graduate Advisor.

**Enrollment.** Students are eligible to enroll in exam credits after they have completed a minimum of 21 hours of course work; the exam should be completed in the student's final semester. Three credit hours of MRTS 5900 (special problems) are required for the exam.

Students should note that the degree plan limits MRTS 5900 (special problems) to 3 hours, therefore

**students who choose the Exam option CANNOT enroll in any additional special problems course.** In other words, the only special problems course they can take is the exam hours. If for some reason, enrollment in the exam hours would exceed the 3 hour limit, students **must take an additional 3 hours** of credit to meet the degree requirements (students would graduate with a total of 33 credit hours instead of the minimum 30 hours).

**Registration.** The exam is scheduled once every fall (typically November) and spring (typically April) semester. Exact exam dates will be made available at the beginning of each semester. You will need to register for the exam at least one month before the date of the exam. You can register by submitting the MA Comps Registration form to the departmental Graduate Advisor (the form is available on the department website). Once your registration has been received, you will get a confirmation email to your UNT email address. If a student does not register with the Graduate Advisor at least one month prior to the exam, the student may not be allowed to take the exam. It is recommended that if a student decides not to take the comprehensive exam after registering that the student inform the Graduate Advisor of his/her decision prior to the exam date. Once the exam has been administered, it will count as an attempt at the exam. If the student fails to submit a completed exam by the due date and time, it will be a considered failed attempt.

**Preparation.** Notes taken in classes and on all course readings and media texts will be necessary in preparing for the examination. Students should review the readings and media texts assigned for each class as they prepare for the examination. However, total reliance on course notes is not sufficient; essay answers must be strengthened by direct references to and engagement with books, articles, media, and other materials covered in classes. In consultation with the Major Professor, students may also need to prepare with an additional reading list or media texts (e.g. films).

**Structure.** The exam will consist of three essay questions determined by the Major Professor in consultation with the Exam Committee. The student will work with their Major Professor to create a reading list tailored to their academic interests that draws from material covered in their graduate coursework in Media Arts.

You are expected to thoroughly answer each question, demonstrating your comprehension and mastery of the concepts, theories, and/or research. Relevant examples and integration of concepts from various courses and readings is expected. There is no specific requirements for length; graders look for a full answer. An answer that is too short will probably not fully answer the question and will be scored low. However, it does not matter how long an answer is, if it does not directly answer the question it will not earn a passing score.

Exams must be submitted as typed responses to the essay questions. Exams may use any appropriate reference format (e.g. MLA, APA) with approval of the Major Professor. Note that citations to lectures, course discussions, class notes, and/or professors are not considered appropriate support. Answers must include appropriate and relevant citations from peer-reviewed manuscripts, policies, and/or industry publications. Answers, including references to media texts such as films, must be specific and properly cited.

**Note to English Second Language Speakers.** Exams written by international students, or students who are not native speakers of English, must be proficient to a reasonable level.

**Administration of the Exam.** After enrolling in in exam hours, you will be enrolled in a “Special Topics”

course on Canvas; all committee members will also be added to the course. On the day of the exam, the Major Professor will make the exam questions available as a Canvas assignment. Exams are typically completed at home, but the location is up to the discretion of your Major Professor. You will have 7 days to complete the exam and submit it to Canvas; all exams will be checked against plagiarism software. Once the exam has been administered, it will count as an attempt at the exam. If you fail to submit a completed exam by the due date and time it will be a considered failed attempt.

**Exam Results.** Two members of the committee will grade each question. Students will be informed of the results of the exam via Canvas. Students can choose to meet with their Major Professor to discuss the details of the exam as needed.

*Each question will be evaluated and assigned a grade based on the following categories:*

- **High Pass.** A High Pass requires a higher order of synthetic understanding, historical or contextual range, original insight, theoretical sophistication, and detailed evidence. In assigning a High Pass, graders look for evidence of serious and sustained independent thinking and original analysis.
- **Pass.** A Pass requires sound conceptual grasp of critical/cultural studies or media industry studies, as well as evidence of a solid familiarity with the individual theories, concepts, texts, or research discussed. Successful students are able to respond productively to questions and argue points with clarity and specificity, while demonstrating competent knowledge of the field.
- **Revise and Resubmit.** Should you be asked to revise and resubmit one or more sections of the exam, you will have one week from the date the grade was received, regardless of whether one or more answers have to be revised. You should include a cover letter that summarizes each of the concerns noted by graders and your response to each concern, including the changes that were made in the revision. In addition, any changes or new text in the answers themselves should be highlighted.
- **Fail.** If you fail one or more sections of the exam you may retake it once the following semester. The first failure does not appear on your transcript.

*If a student fails any section twice, the student is dismissed from the program.* In cases of extreme hardship, a student may appeal the decision to be dismissed from the program and take a section for a third time. The burden of proof for extreme hardship is on the student. Appeals for a third take must be made in writing to the Graduate Advisor. The final decision to allow a student to take comprehensive exams for a third try will be decided by the departmental Graduate Committee. If a student takes comprehensive exams for a third time and fails, the student is dismissed from the program without further recourse within the department.

If a student feels that the grading was unfair for some reason, the student should file a written appeal with the Graduate Advisor. All grade appeals on comprehensive exams will be referred to the departmental Graduate Committee. The decision concerning the appeal and the disposition thereof will be at the discretion of the departmental Graduate Committee.

***You must pass all three sections of the exam to meet the degree requirements.***

***If you do not pass all three questions of the exam you will be required to retake the failed section(s) the following semester.***

To pass a section, a student must receive a High Pass or Pass from each of the two graders as outlined below:

- 2 High Passes = High Pass
- 2 Passes = Pass
- 1 High Pass + 1 Pass = Pass

If a student receives a Revise and Resubmit from each grader, the student must submit a revision to the section(s) within one week. The answer(s) will be re-evaluated and each grader will assign either a Pass or Fail.

If a student receives a Fail from each grader, then the student will fail the section(s) and must retake the failed section(s) the following semester.

**SPLIT DECISIONS.** If the decisions are split in any way other than what is outlined above, then a third grader will make a determination as outlined below:

- 1 High Pass/Pass + 1 Fail = 3<sup>rd</sup> Grader
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Grader evaluates as High Pass/Pass = Pass
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Grader evaluates as Fail = Fail

- 1 High Pass/Pass/Fail + 1 Revise & Resubmit = 3<sup>rd</sup> Grader
  - Third grader will only grade as either Revise & Resubmit or as the decision of the other grader; this eliminates the possibility of three different grade responses. If the third grader grades the response as Revise and Resubmit, then the student will need to submit a revision to their answer in one week. Otherwise, the third grader's response is the final determination for the section(s).

## MA Thesis Procedures and Timeline

**Master's Thesis Defined.** A Master's thesis is defined as a substantial work of original research, which synthesizes concepts, methodologies, and skills developed especially within the context of the Master's Degree program. In the Media Arts department, the thesis must be submitted in the form of a written document focusing on an aspect of media history, theory, criticism, production, distribution, law and regulation, global media, or other appropriate aspects of media texts and industries.

**Graduate Thesis Committee.** This Committee will be made up of a thesis Chair from Media Arts and at least two other graduate faculty members, one of whom can be from another department when appropriate. **You must have taken at least one course with your thesis Chair;** it is strongly advised that you take at least one course with all members of your thesis committee.

**Thesis Chair.** Your thesis Chair must be a member of the Media Arts Graduate Faculty and will assist you in direct preparation of your thesis and serve as chair of the committee.

*It is your responsibility, after you have consulted with the Department's Graduate Advisor, to get the consent of an eligible faculty member to serve as your thesis Chair and to determine in advance that the faculty member will be on campus during critical phases of your program (e.g., completion and defense of your thesis).*

**You CANNOT enroll in thesis hours without approval from your thesis Chair.**

The responsibility of the thesis Chair is to guide the student in his/her work. This mandate does not include the re-writing of the thesis in whole or in part, nor does it include assistance with basic research tasks. Should students require extra assistance with writing or research, he/she should work in conjunction with the library reference staff and the staff of the writing center.

Faculty members differ in the way they wish to be involved in helping you with the writing of your thesis, but it is **YOUR** responsibility to seek whatever help is needed, to submit drafts for correction and approval, and to meet university deadlines. Your thesis may be the most important element in your life while you are writing or producing it, but it is only one of the many things a faculty member must do. Therefore, don't expect instantaneous response to your requests. The degree to which the other member(s) of the committee become involved in your writing of the thesis will vary with the individual professor. Be sure to ask the other members of the committee when they want to see your thesis (i.e., after each chapter is finished, or only when the thesis has been completely written, etc.).

**Modifications to Graduate Thesis Committee.** Students should be aware that the replacement of Committee members should take place only in exceptional circumstances and always in consultation with your thesis Chair. In the event of a change of thesis topic that necessitates a change of thesis Chair, the student should consult with the Graduate Advisor. In the event of a faculty member leaving campus, the student should consult with the Graduate Advisor about an appropriate replacement.

Once a thesis Chair has been approved, and a Degree Plan has been filed with the Graduate School, any changes to the Thesis Committee must be approved by the Graduate Advisor.

**Enrollment.** Six credit hours of MRTS 5950 (thesis credits) are required for graduation; they cannot be

taken concurrently. You must be enrolled in thesis hours to defend your prospectus and thesis. Once you have enrolled in MRTS 5950 you are required to enroll continuously until you have successfully completed the written thesis and oral defense. You will not be awarded any credit for this course until your thesis has been completed and filed with the Graduate Dean. A letter grade is assigned for the 6 thesis hours.

**Deadlines.** You should note and observe carefully all deadlines pertaining to graduation printed in the current Graduate Catalog. Based on your discussion with your thesis Chair, and taking into account the application and filing deadlines that are printed in the Graduate Catalog, as well as Departmental Thesis Defense deadlines, which precede University deadlines, you should apply for graduation during the agreed-upon semester. See also Application for Graduate Degree in the Graduate Catalog.

**Prospectus.** Students should start preparing for the prospectus early, typically after the completion of their first semester (or 9 hours). To graduate in 2 years, students should plan to defend their prospectus in the first semester of their second year (after 18 hours); *the prospectus must be defended at least 1 semester prior to the defense of the thesis.*

The prospectus meeting is held for two reasons. First, it is a help session. It allows your Graduate Thesis Committee to meet with you as a group to discuss specific aspects of your prospectus that seem weak or need clarification. The committee will make recommendations to improve the subsequent research and writing of the thesis. In addition, the prospectus meeting results in a decision concerning disposal of your proposed thesis project. At the meeting, the Committee will decide whether to allow you to continue with the selected thesis topic, and, if so, what recommendations to give you concerning handling of the topic.

During the writing of your prospectus, you should work closely with your thesis Chair. When he or she determines that your prospectus is ready to be presented to your Committee, you should, in consultation with your thesis Chair, make arrangements for your presentation. It is your responsibility to ensure that the date and time selected for your oral presentation are convenient for all of your committee members.

**You must distribute one copy of your prospectus to all members of your thesis committee at least two weeks in advance of the meeting.**

Notice of the defense should be announced to the department at least one week prior to the scheduled meeting. Normally, this meeting is open to anyone wishing to attend. Under certain circumstances, the meeting will be closed to all but full-time faculty members whenever your thesis Chair believes it necessary to do so.

**Thesis.** After your prospectus has been approved, you'll research and write your thesis under the supervision of your thesis Chair. Before you begin writing, you should consult the UNT Thesis Manual with guidelines and specifics on electronic submission. This manual is located on the UNT website. For details about the technical aspects of preparing your thesis, and information about style, preparation of the abstract, and the correcting, copying and filing of your thesis, be sure to check with the procedures outlined by the Toulouse Graduate School.

**Note to English Second Language Speakers.** Theses written by international students, or students who are not native speakers of English, must be proficient to a reasonable level. Students may find it useful

to consult the Campus Writing Center.

**Human Subjects Review.** All research conducted at the University of North Texas must comply with federal and university Institutional Review Board (IRB) policies. Any student preparing a thesis should consult the policies, procedures, and deadlines on the compliance website. Appropriate human subject training certification and IRB approval must be obtained prior to the student collecting any data or conducting any research with human subjects. The IRB approval forms should be included in the final thesis whenever human subjects are involved. Please note the IRB approval process could take 4-8 weeks, so plan accordingly.

**Thesis Defense.** Your Thesis Committee will examine your written thesis in a meeting with you and the entire Committee. It is your responsibility, in consultation with your thesis Chair, to arrange a time and date which will be convenient for all of the members of your committee for the examination. Candidates who are out of town or who neglect to keep in communication with their thesis Chair should not expect to self-schedule their defense. The decision to schedule a thesis defense is always at the discretion of the thesis Chair. A student should not assume the availability of faculty (note: faculty are not contractually obligated to be available in summer), but instead must maintain regular contact to provide advance notice to faculty who will be participating in a thesis defense.

It is your responsibility also to see that the oral examination is taken before the completion deadline listed in the calendar in the current Graduate Catalog. This date usually falls about halfway through the semester.

**The defense must be scheduled at least 2 weeks prior to the Toulouse Graduate School deadline for final submission; the departmental Graduate Advisor will NOT sign thesis defense forms that were not defended at least 2 weeks prior to this deadline.**

**You must distribute one copy of your thesis to all members of your thesis committee at least three weeks in advance of the defense.**

Notice of the defense should be announced to the department at least one week prior to the scheduled meeting. Normally, this meeting is open to anyone wishing to attend. Under certain circumstances, the meeting will be closed to all but full-time faculty members whenever your thesis Chair believes it necessary to do so.

During the defense, in addition to answering questions about your thesis, you should make notes of changes suggested by your Committee members. After the defense is completed, you will be excused from the room while the Committee decides whether or not to accept your thesis. You will then be recalled and informed of the Committee's decision and any conditions attached to it. If your Committee has voted to accept your thesis, you will then ask the committee members to sign the appropriate pages or forms.

The Committee may require revisions prior to approving the thesis and it is your responsibility to make the required changes in a timely manner. In some cases, the revisions will only be submitted to your thesis Chair and in some cases the entire Committee may require approval of the changes. The Committee will decide if it is necessary to hold a second examination meeting or not. Therefore, scheduling a thesis defense close to the Toulouse submission deadline, may result in a delay of graduation. *If you fail to submit revisions or the Committee does not accept the thesis prior to the*

*Toulouse deadline, you will be required to enroll in MRTS 5950 for an additional semester to allow time for revisions.*

**Timeline.** In accordance with the Graduate Handbook, you are expected to complete your thesis within one calendar year. You should work with your thesis Chair to determine a timeline according to your specific thesis goals and personal schedule. While the chart below is only a suggested and approximate schedule, failure to make progress or meet significant deadlines could delay your desired graduation date. You are expected to stay in communication with your thesis Chair about your progress and intended graduation date.

We strongly advise students to be ahead of schedule with their thesis progress to avoid delays, or possible issues in scheduling a defense.

**THE GRADUATE DIRECTOR WILL NOT SIGN DEFENSE FORMS FOR A THESIS DEFENSE WAS NOT CONDUCTED AT LEAST TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE GRADUATE SCHOOL DEADLINE.**

**Failure to defend your thesis before this deadline will result in delayed graduation.**



## Sample Timeline for Completing a Thesis in a 2-Year Degree Plan

TASK	DEADLINE	SAMPLE TIMELINE
Identify a Thesis Chair	Typically in the second semester of the program or after completion of 9 hours	In your 2 <sup>nd</sup> semester
Enroll in thesis hours	Typically in the third semester of the program or after completion of 18 hours	In your 3 <sup>rd</sup> semester
<b>Submit thesis prospectus</b> to your Thesis Chair; email entire committee to <b>schedule a date</b> for the oral defense of your prospectus	1 month prior to the defense date	Early in your 3 <sup>rd</sup> semester; students often work on prospectus on their own over the summer
<b>*Submit a copy</b> of your thesis prospectus to your entire thesis committee	No later than 2 weeks prior to the scheduled defense	Early to midway through 3 <sup>rd</sup> semester
<b>*Successfully defend</b> thesis prospectus	At least one semester prior to the desired graduation date	Midway through 3 <sup>rd</sup> semester
Submit a chapter draft to Thesis Chair (and committee if specified)	Approximately 6 months prior to thesis defense	3 <sup>rd</sup> semester
Submit a chapter draft to Thesis Chair (and committee if specified)	Approximately 5 months prior to thesis defense	3 <sup>rd</sup> semester
Submit a chapter draft to Thesis Chair (and committee if specified)	Approximately 4 months prior to thesis defense	3 <sup>rd</sup> semester
Submit a chapter draft to Thesis Chair (and committee if specified)	Approximately 3 months prior to thesis defense	Early 4 <sup>th</sup> semester; students often work on thesis on their own over the winter break
Submit a chapter draft to Thesis Chair (and committee if specified)	Approximately 2 months prior to thesis defense	Early 4 <sup>th</sup> semester
<b>*Submit final revisions</b> of thesis draft to Chair. Email your entire Committee to <b>schedule a date</b> for your Thesis Defense	No later than 1 month prior to the defense	Midway through 4 <sup>th</sup> semester
<b>*Submit a copy</b> of your final thesis draft to your entire committee	No later than 3 weeks prior to the scheduled defense date	Midway through 4 <sup>th</sup> semester
<b>*Oral Defense</b> of Final Thesis	No later than 2 weeks prior to the Graduate School submission deadline	Midway through 4 <sup>th</sup> semester
<b>*Submit Final Thesis</b> (including all corrections) to the Graduate School	Check Toulouse for specific dates; typically several weeks before the end of the semester	4 <sup>th</sup> semester

## How to Write a Thesis Proposal

Generally speaking, film, television, and digital media studies grew out of academic traditions in both the humanities and the social sciences. The two tracks for MA students, Critical Cultural Studies and Media Industry Studies, incorporate theories and methodologies drawn from both traditions. As such, thesis projects may incorporate a more qualitative approach using theories drawn from literature, cultural studies, etc. and/or a more quantitative approach to the study of media, using theories and methods drawn from economics, management, and sociology, etc.

All graduate students writing an MA thesis will develop a thesis within the theoretical frameworks introduced in their Media Arts coursework and, in particular, core graduate courses 5120, 5121, and 5125. Different theoretical and methodological frameworks may require different formats for theses and proposals, and those should be determined and approved in collaboration with the student's thesis Chair.

*A thesis proposal project should include four or five parts:*

### 1. Introduction

Begin with an introduction that describes your project and identifies your preliminary thesis (argument). At the proposal stage, the thesis (argument) can be offered as a question that your project will seek to investigate and/or resolve. The introduction should also outline the significance of the study, and provide a definition of important terms and project boundaries.

### 2. Literature Review

Include a comprehensive section that reviews the pertinent literature related to your topic. It should be written in such a way as to clearly lay the theoretical, historical, and methodological groundwork for your project; that is, it should be directly related to your thesis statement. This section should identify the theories and conceptual frameworks you will be using to answer your research questions. It should clearly articulate and identify what has been said and done in the field prior to your thesis that is relevant to your methods and arguments. You should describe how your thesis draws upon and expands what has already been written about your given topic.

### 3. Methodology / Objects or Texts of Analysis / Sample

For studies that involve collecting data – for example with datasets, surveys, or interviews - you must describe the proposed methodological approach. In addition to theoretical justifications for the methodology, you should describe the selection of the sample/population as well as the procedures for analysis of data. When applicable, include an appendix with any instruments that will be used, such as surveys or interview questions. All research involving human subjects must obtain approval from UNT's Institutional Review Board before you can begin collecting data.

In media studies, theory and method are often connected and inseparable, however, even for textual analysis you should include an explanation and justification for your chosen texts, objects of analysis, platforms, etc. In other words, do not assume that it is obvious why you are analyzing the

films you are including, but rather provide a contextual justification that explains the rationale for your selection.

#### **4. Chapter Breakdown**

Include a proposed chapter breakdown of your completed thesis. A typical thesis structure would set up an issue or problem in the first chapter (or introduction) and then examine that problem across 2-4 chapters. This should provide details and justification for the proposed organization and structure of the thesis.

#### **5. Bibliography**

All proposals must include an accurate reference list or bibliography that includes the resources you have already consulted and those which you will use in your final thesis.

Although there is no set page length for a thesis proposal, a successful proposal usually runs anywhere from 15-25 double spaced pages. For more help on developing your thesis proposal, work with your potential thesis Chair, committee members, or graduate advisor.

**MA Degree Plan: Critical Cultural Studies**  
**Department of Media Arts**

NAME:

EIS ID:

REQUIRED GRAD ONLY COURSES (6 HOURS)	SEMESTER	INSTRUCTOR	GRADE
MRTS 5120 Critical/Cultural Media Theory			
MRTS 5121 Digital Media Studies			
CRITICAL/CULTURAL STUDIES TRACK (9 HOURS)	SEMESTER	INSTRUCTOR	GRADE
1.			
2.			
3.			
ELECTIVES (MINIMUM 9 HOURS) **Can include up to but not required** 6 credit hours from graduate courses outside the dept. 3 hours practicum <u>OR</u> 3 hours internship 3 hours special problems	SEMESTER	INSTRUCTOR	GRADE
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
CAPSTONE	SEMESTER	MAJOR PROFESSOR	GRADE
THESIS (6 HOURS MRTS 5950)			
EXAMS (3 HOURS MRTS 5900)			

**ANTICIPATED GRADUATION DATE:**

Graduate Advisor Signature

Date

**MA Degree Plan: Media Industry Studies**  
 Department of Media Arts

NAME:

EIS ID:

REQUIRED GRAD ONLY COURSES (6 HOURS)	SEMESTER	INSTRUCTOR	GRADE
MRTS 5125 Media Industry Studies			
MRTS 5120 Critical Cultural Studies <u>OR</u> MRTS 5121 Digital Media Studies [can take both, 1 counts as an elective]			
INDUSTRY STUDIES TRACK (9 HOURS)	SEMESTER	INSTRUCTOR	GRADE
1.			
2.			
3.			
ELECTIVES (MINIMUM 9 HOURS) **Can include up to but not required** 6 credit hours from graduate courses outside the dept. 3 hours practicum <u>OR</u> 3 hours internship 3 hours special problems	SEMESTER	INSTRUCTOR	GRADE
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
CAPSTONE	SEMESTER	CHAIR/ADVISOR	GRADE
THESIS (6 HOURS MRTS 5950)			
EXAMS (3 HOURS MRTS 5900)			

**ANTICIPATED GRADUATION DATE:**

Graduate Advisor Signature

Date

## Request for Designation or Re-designation of Exam Committee

Department of Media Arts  
University of North Texas

Name:

EIS ID:

Pathway:  Crit/Cult Studies  Industry Studies

**Major: Media Arts**

Major Professor:

Second Member:

Third Member:

Have you completed at least 21 hours of graduate course credit in Media Arts?  Yes  No

Have you taken at least one course with each committee member?  Yes  No

Are you in your final semester of course work?  Yes  No

Have you previously failed any portion of a comprehensive exam?  Yes  No  
If yes, when and which question?

Date you are requesting to take the exam:

Signature of Major Professor & Date

Signature of Graduate Advisor & Date

**Request for Designation or Re-Designation of Thesis Committee**  
**University of North Texas**  
**Department of Media Arts**

**Instructions:**

By completion of 9 hours of graduate course work, the student should consult with their thesis Chair concerning the development of a Thesis/Exam Committee. After consultation, the student should fill out the form below and take it to each of the requested committee members for signature. When the signatures have been obtained, the form should be returned to the MRTS Graduate Advisor.

Name:  EIS ID:

Pathway:       Critical Cultural Studies       Industry Studies

Anticipated Semester of Exam or Thesis Defense:

**Requested Committee:**

Thesis Chair:

Second Member:

Third Member:

Approved with the following provisions (if applicable):

MRTS Graduate Advisor Signature & Date

**MA Thesis Contract**  
**Department of Media Arts**  
**University of North Texas**

Name:

EIS ID:

Pathway:     Crit/Cult Studies     Industry Studies

Major: Media Arts

Thesis Committee Chair:

**Media Arts Policy on Thesis Committees and Timeline**

The thesis represents a project of original, independent research in an approved area related to the student's course of study. It is expected that students will complete and defend their thesis successfully within one calendar year of establishing their thesis committee. At the same time, students should consider that many graduate faculty members are not available during the summer semesters.

Graduate students are responsible for organizing their own thesis committees. This should be done by asking faculty members with expertise in the areas to be studied in the thesis to serve as committee members. No faculty member is required to serve on a particular committee and may properly decline membership due to other work commitments, lack of expertise in the proposed topic, or other reasons.

A thesis committee shall be constituted for a period of 12 months. After that time, the thesis Chair may, at his/her discretion, extend the committee for final completion and defense of the thesis. Students not making satisfactory progress toward the completion of the thesis will be required to form a new thesis committee.

It is understood that once the thesis option is chosen and agreed upon by the student, thesis Chair, and graduate adviser then the thesis must be successfully completed in order for the student to graduate from the Media Arts, MA program. (A student may NOT change to the non-thesis option after enrollment in thesis hours).

Student Signature & Date

Major Professor Signature & Date

Graduate Advisor Signature & Date



## Comprehensive Exam Registration Request

Department of Media Arts  
University of North Texas

Name:

EIS ID:

Pathway:  Crit/Cult Studies  Industry Studies

**Major: Media Arts**

Major Professor:

Second Member:

Third Member:

Date you are requesting to take the exam:

I understand that the exam will be emailed to my UNT email address on the date designated for the current semester. I will have 7 days to complete all sections of the exam and must submit my work to the Graduate Advisor via email no later than the deadline. If I fail to submit the exam by the required deadline, the exam will automatically be recorded as a failed attempt.

In accordance with UNT Policy, I will uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. This means I will be the sole author of all answers on the exam and will not seek assistance or aid from other students or unauthorized resources. I will not engage in any form of dishonesty, cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, or sabotage. I understand that if the Exam Committee finds evidence that I violated any policy pertaining to UNT's Student Academic Integrity policy then I will automatically fail the exam and be dismissed from the program.

Student Signature

Date

Signature of Major Professor

Date

Signature of Graduate Advisor

Date