B.A. in Cinema & Media Studies

Students who major in Cinema & Media Studies learn to engage critically with visual media in diverse global cultures. They examine how film and media reflect and influence art, culture, politics, and entertainment. Through courses covering media criticism, film history and culture, and contemporary cinema and technology, students investigate how visual media shape our experiences in and perceptions of the world. They apply their analytical skills to hands-on practice including internships and courses in screenwriting. Because visual media literacy is an increasingly critical skill in diverse fields, many students pair this major with a degree in STEM, the social sciences, or a pre-professional field. Graduates bring a valued perspective and insights to organizations in a wide range of fields —spanning media, technology, arts and culture, education, entertainment, and more.

Please note that this major does not provide formal training in film production (beyond screenwriting). Students may gain exposure to production techniques in some of our classes, through courses in the Department of Digital Arts & Experimental Media or by participating in LUX Video Production Club.

Get to Know Our Majors

Cinema and Media Studies opens up a world of possibilities for students and alumni. Learn more about our students’ experiences in their own words in our student spotlights.

Admissions, Advising & Student Resources

The Cinema & Media Studies major has minimum requirements. The admission requirements are the following:

- Minimum 2.0 overall GPA
- Completion of either the English Composition requirement or a W-course
- Completion of one of CMS 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275 or the equivalent

Please see an Adviser to declare the major and our Undergraduate Programs section for further information about career paths, scholarships, and other student resources.

Degree Requirements

60 credits from course groups listed below

30 credits from Cinema and Media Studies core courses:
(Choose one from each category)

A. GATEWAY
CMS 301 Film and Media Studies: Analysis (5 credits)

B. HISTORY I
C. HISTORY II
CMS 312 History of Film: 1960-1989 (5 credits)
CMS 313 History of Film: 1989 to Present (5 credits)
CMS 314 History of Television (5 credits)
CMS 315 History of New Media (5 credits)

D. CRITICAL CONCEPTS I
CMS 302 Media Arts and Cultures (5 credits)
CMS 303 Genre Studies (5 credits)
CMS 304 Television Studies (5 credits)

E. CRITICAL CONCEPTS II
CMS 320: Nation and Cinema (5 credits)
CMS 321: Oppositional Cinema/Media (5 credits)

F. CAPSTONE
CMS 480: Senior Capstone (topics vary; 5 credits)

30 Credits from Approved Electives
Remaining 30 credits to be earned in approved cinema and media studies elective courses offered by the Cinema & Media Studies program or other UW departments. At least two courses (10 credits) of electives must be CMS courses. A minimum of four of the required elective courses (20 credits) must be upper-division courses. Any CMS course from the above Core Curriculum in excess of core requirements may count as electives. List of CMS electives available here. Please see an advisor if you have any questions about electives.

No course presented toward fulfillment of the 60-credit major requirements may be taken on a credit/no credit or satisfactory/non-satisfactory basis.

Other Cinema and Media Credit Options:
- CMS 490, independent studies: students can develop special projects related to cinema such as research on a special topic in cinema studies for maximum of five credits towards the elective requirements.
- CMS 491, internship: If a student pursues an internship at the same site for two quarters in a row, they can get the first quarter counted as general electives (graded CR/NC). The second quarter can count towards the CMS major electives, with the approval of the supervising faculty member.

Course Information
- Cinema and Media Studies Course Table
- Cinema and Media Studies Electives Options
- National Cinema course options

Student Activities
CMS majors, check out our Facebook group for majors! Please note this is a social page for majors to connect with other majors.

If you’d like to connect with other students to watch and discuss film, the UW Film Club may be for you! The club organizes quarterly filmmaking competitions such as the UW Student Film Festival and the 36 hour Film Competition.

Are you interested in film production? There is a UW student film production club! Check out LUX Video Production club’s page for more info or the LUX: Video YouTube channel to see their recent projects.

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