Graduate Certificate in Cinema & Media Studies

The Graduate Certificate Program in Cinema and Media Studies (CMS) is available to any student currently enrolled in a PhD program at the University of Washington.

Applications are accepted throughout the year and will be reviewed on a quarterly basis. Students will receive the Certificate upon completion of one required course (5 credits), three electives (15 credits), and a concluding project.

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Application

Any University of Washington student enrolled in a doctoral degree program is eligible to apply to the Cinema and Media Studies graduate certificate program. Students are required to have a total GPA of 3.5 in their home department prior to admission in this program.

There are two options for submitting your Application:

- Submit via Online Application Form
- Submit the following via Mail or in person to Comparative Literature Department
  - Application Form (PDF)
  - Goal Statement
  - UW Transcript (unofficial copy acceptable—See: www.washington.edu/students/reg/transcripts.html)

Send all three (3) documents to

Yuko Mera
Graduate Program Advisor
Dept. of Cinema and Media Studies
Box 354338
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Applications will be reviewed on a quarterly basis. An advising session with the Director will be established following admission to the program.

Description
This graduate program emphasizes the study of film and related media from a humanistic perspective, within the broader context of global culture. While our curriculum centers on the medium of film, we understand the key concerns of film history and film theory as a productive horizon for assessing the phenomenal advances of digital and electronic media as well as a cinematic genealogy that stretches back to encompass the magic lantern, photography, sound recordings, and television among other technologically-produced art forms. At the core of our curricular goals, then, we emphasize the fundamental skills of cinema studies: an ability to interpret and clearly communicate the formal and stylistic elements of moving-image and audio-visual texts; a knowledgeable assessment of the canon of popular, art-cinema, and avant-garde cinemas, as well as animation and documentary forms; a capacity to engage the philosophical and social debates most germane to film theory since the early 20th century.

Our curriculum stresses a comparative framework. In particular, students will be encouraged to assess our objects of study as they cross national borders, historical periods, and media forms.

Comparison Across National Borders

Advanced telecommunications and the worldwide expansion of media markets create an urgent need to understand our global media culture, the cross-pollination of national and international cultural traditions, and the styles and genres developing in this context. Yet we also recognize that the same cinematic and media technologies operate differently in alternative nations and regions as they get absorbed into specific cultural traditions, economic contexts, and political structures. Our faculty has expertise on film and media culture in a range of European, Scandinavian, Slavic, Asian, Middle Eastern, U.S., and Latin American contexts. Students are encouraged to reflect upon the interplay between globalizing and localizing forces in defining the contemporary and historic media landscape.

Comparison Across Historical Periods

We approach the cinema as a transitional medium that carries forward from the nineteenth century powerful traditions of narrative and visual representation. Our students should understand this heritage, should be able to assess its development in early, modern, and postmodern cinema even as new media and new functions in art and entertainment arrive. Our faculty has particular expertise in historical and archival methodologies, with a special focus on early cinema and visual culture in India, Germany, Russia, China, and the U.S. Students are encouraged to develop archival and historical methodologies and pursue original historical research in the field.

Comparison Across Media

We live at a moment when every important idea, story, image, and sound is apt to travel across every available media technology. While the convergence of media enabled by digital technologies constitutes a highly visible threshold for the interaction of multiple media forms, this program also emphasizes the inter-medial environments defining a cinematic and audiovisual genealogy that includes the magic lantern, nineteenth century optical toys, photography, radio, and television. In addition, we define cinema as a medium constituted by its position “in between” related media and social processes: between popular entertainments (magazines, pop music, comics, amusement parks) and the more considered and considerable arts (novel, opera, theater); between its nineteenth-century technological base (gears and celluloid) and its constantly renewed contemporary formats (widescreen, high-definition TV, virtual reality); between a corporate or an anonymous mode of production and the auteur mode it sometimes adopts from literature. Students will be encouraged to unite and study the media products and processes of both “high” and “mass” culture with equal seriousness, and with critical intent.

Courses

Cinema and Media Studies Electives
Past Courses in Cinema and Media Studies

Requirements

Course Requirements

This certificate program requires a total of four Cinema and Media Studies courses (20 credits). One of these (C LIT 520) is a requisite introductory course that offers a basic grounding in the theory, history and criticism of moving images, and introduces central debates, topics and methods in the field of cinema and media studies. The remaining three courses will be electives. One of these electives (five credits) may be an independently directed study. One of these electives (five credits) may be a 400-level seminar. All of these credits must be earned in graded courses. Please note that overlap of coursework applied towards the certificate program and degree program must not exceed 6 credits and is limited to elective coursework in the degree program. Successful completion of the CMS Certificate requires a cumulative GPA of 3.5 for courses required for the Certificate as well as a grade of 3.5 or higher for each course counted toward the Certificate.

Concluding Requirements

As a conclusion to the requirements of the Certificate Program, each student will choose one of two options, as follows. An exception applies only to those students currently enrolled in the DXARTS PhD program, as explained below.

1. Research Paper. One option takes the form of a research paper (approximately 20-25 pages). A two-person committee, comprised of Cinema and Media Studies faculty, evaluates the paper. The paper should be developed from a course paper in a previous Cinema and Media Studies seminar. If the student has worked with a Cinema and Media Studies faculty member on an earlier version of that paper, that faculty member should be on the committee. One of the two faculty members will supervise the development of the paper. The second member will function as a reader.

   This option will allow the respective student to work closely with a faculty member on their writing and research in a manner otherwise limited by the constraints of a 10-week seminar. The goal of this option is thus to produce a paper of publishable quality, and students will be encouraged to explore peer-reviewed journals related to the field and to consider the different methodologies and concerns relevant to these publication venues. Publication of the research paper, however, is not required. Rather, once both faculty members have approved the paper, the concluding requirement will be complete.

   This Research Paper may be written in the context of a credit/no credit independent study, in which case it will comprise a “fifth” course in Cinema and Media Studies. However, the student may also choose to develop this concluding Research Paper independently of credit hours.

2. Qualifying Examination and Dissertation. Alternately, the student may choose to include one or more Cinema and Media Studies topics on their PhD Qualifying Examination. In these cases, at least one member of the Graduate Group in Cinema and Media Studies must be a formal member of the Ph.D. Qualifying Examination committee. Under most circumstances, the Graduate Group member in the student’s home department will serve in this function. The dissertation must contribute in some way to the field of Cinema and Media Studies, and at least one member of the faculty group must be a member on the student’s dissertation committee.

   In the event that a student initially opts to incorporate film and media studies materials in the dissertation, but either alters the project to exclude these materials or does not finish the dissertation, he/she may then opt to write a research paper and conclude the certificate requirements in this way.

Exception to Concluding Requirements

The one exception to these two options for the concluding requirement applies to those students who are currently enrolled in the DXARTS PhD program. In these cases, the DXARTS “Final PhD Project,” rather than a dissertation, will constitute the concluding
requirement. DXARTS students will pursue their "Final PhD Project" in accordance with the requirements established by the DXARTS program and under the supervision of DXARTS faculty.

Participating Faculty

Faculty participating in the Cinema and Media Studies Program.

MIRG

MIRG (Moving Images Research Group)
MIRG-GIG (Graduate Interest Group)

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