

Film Studies, PhD

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- solidify skills for work in the discipline, including researching and writing a book-length study, public presentations, publishing, grant applications, etc.;
- gain confidence and fluency working with concepts of film and media theory and learn to synthesize, adapt, contextualize, and critique theoretical approaches;
- acquire and mobilize advanced primary research skills and deepen their ability to work with models and methods of film historiography, and to articulate historical sources with theoretical approaches;
- acquire and mobilize an advanced understanding of the discipline's history and current status;
- acquire and mobilize advanced discipline-level knowledge in historical periods, global variations, and diverse forms, and learn to take a position in the future development of film and media studies;
- learn the fundamental skills for undergraduate-level teaching in film and media studies; and
- deepen professionalization skills in order to explore film and media-related career possibilities within and beyond academia (for example, in media and arts organizations, publishing, teaching, archives, film programming, and festivals).

Requirements

The Doctor of Philosophy program in film studies requires a minimum of 72 s.h. of graduate credit, of which 39 s.h. must be earned at the University of Iowa after a student has received their MA degree. Semester hours are earned through coursework and eventually work focused on the completion of a dissertation. Students must earn a minimum program grade-point average of 3.25.

The program's coursework is broadly concentrated in film history and film theory, with specific courses offered on a wide range of topics. With the regular consultation and guidance of a faculty advisor and committee, students formulate and pursue a plan of study during their first year in the program; prepare and conduct a written and oral comprehensive examination typically in their second or third year; write and present a dissertation prospectus to a carefully selected committee; and complete a dissertation in an area of advanced, original research that is defended orally in a meeting with the student's committee prior to final deposit. A detailed summary of the requirements for the PhD in film studies is available on the Department of Cinematic Arts website.

The PhD in film studies requires the following coursework.

Core Requirements

Course #	Title	Hours
All of these (must be taken at the University of Iowa):		
CINE:5500	Success in Graduate Studies (consult advisor about semester hour enrollment)	1-3

CINE:5673	Advanced Film Theory (taken twice for 3 s.h. each)	6
CINE:5675	Advanced Film History (taken twice for 3 s.h. each)	6
CINE:7615	Film Studies Seminar	3
CINE:7700	PhD Comprehensive Exam Preparation	3
CINE:7992	Thesis	4
Seminar course numbered 7000 or above		

Electives

Students are required to enroll in the two graduate courses offered by the Department of Cinematic Arts each semester. This requirement of two per semester does not include the required CINE:5500 Success in Graduate Studies or CINE:7700 PhD Comprehensive Exam Preparation (typically taken in the fourth semester when the student does their comprehensive exams). Remaining elective hours may be taken in courses selected from other departments; students should consult their advisor.

More information on the program is available on the Department of Cinematic Arts website.

Admission

A faculty committee chaired by the head of film studies evaluates applications to the PhD program. Application materials should include undergraduate and/or graduate transcripts, a personal statement, a writing sample, three letters of recommendation, and samples of creative work when relevant. Admission decisions are based on the full range of an applicant's accomplishments and evidence that the applicant will fit the elements of the program and thrive in the department.

Minimum admission requirements: Applicants should have a BA in film studies or a related discipline and either an MA in film studies or a related discipline, or an MFA in film production with significant experience in film studies.

All applicants must meet the admission requirements of the Graduate College; see the Manual of Rules and Regulations on the Graduate College website. Information about the application process is available on the Department of Cinematic Arts website and the Graduate Admissions website.

Career Advancement

The PhD program in film studies has an impressive job placement record, with graduates located in faculty positions at major research universities and prestigious liberal arts colleges throughout the world. Graduates are, through their published research, visible and productive contributors to film studies and related disciplines, and many have served in leadership positions within professional organizations such as the Society for Cinema and Media Studies.

Within the program, faculty mentor students toward professional careers by supervising their development as both effective teachers and scholars. Regular workshops offered on topics such as journal and conference submissions, job interviews, and related topics help prepare students for careers within and beyond academia. Students are also regularly advised on applying for grants and awards to facilitate their advanced research, whether conducted in Iowa or elsewhere.

The Pomerantz Career Center offers multiple resources to help students find internships and jobs.

Academic Plans

Sample Plan of Study

Sample plans represent one way to complete a program of study. Actual course selection and sequence will vary and should be discussed with an academic advisor. For additional sample plans, see MyUI.

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Course	Title	Hours
Academic Career		
Any Semester		
72 s.h. must be graduate level coursework; maximum of 33 s.h. of graduate transfer credits allowed upon approval. More information is included in the General Catalog and on the department website. ^a		
Graduate College program GPA of at least 3.25 is required. ^b		
Hours		0
First Year		
Fall		
CINE:5500	Success in Graduate Studies ^{c, d}	3
CINE:5673	Advanced Film Theory	3
CINE:5675	Advanced Film History	3
Hours		9
Spring		
CINE:5673 or CINE:7615	Advanced Film Theory or Film Studies Seminar	3
CINE:5675	Advanced Film History	3
Elective course		3
Submit Plan of Study		
Complete Plan of Study Meeting		
Hours		9
Second Year		
Fall		
CINE:5673	Advanced Film Theory	3
CINE:5675 or CINE:7615	Advanced Film History or Film Studies Seminar	3
Elective course		3
Hours		9
Spring		
Exam: Doctoral Comprehensive Exam ^e		
CINE:5675	Advanced Film History	3
CINE:7615	Film Studies Seminar	3
CINE:7700	PhD Comprehensive Exam Preparation ^d	3
Hours		9
Third Year		
Fall		
Dissertation Prospectus ^f		
CINE:7992	Thesis	3
Elective course ^g		3
Elective course ^g		3
Hours		9

Spring

CINE:7992	Thesis	3
Elective course ^g		3
Elective course ^g		3
Hours		9

Fourth Year

Fall

CINE:7992	Thesis	3
Elective course ^g		3
Elective course ^g		3
Hours		9

Spring

CINE:7992	Thesis	3
Elective course ^g		3
Elective course ^g		3
Exam: Doctoral Final Exam ^h		
Hours		9
Total Hours		72

a Students must complete specific requirements in the University of Iowa Graduate College after program admission. Refer to the Graduate College website and the Manual of Rules and Regulations for more information.

b Graduate College program GPA is comprised of all courses that are approved degree requirements. If a student takes more than the minimum required number of semester hours to complete the degree, but all courses taken are eligible to count toward the degree, those courses will be included in the Graduate College program GPA.

c Must be taken during first year fall semester.

d Does not count as one of the two Film Studies courses required each semester.

e Must pass four hour written exam on each of the three major plan of study areas.

f Must pass prospectus no later than the semester following successful completion of the comprehensive exam.

g Typically satisfied with master's graduate transfer credit.

h Dissertation submission and defense.