Film Studies, Ph.D.

Requirements

The Doctor of Philosophy program in film studies requires a minimum of 72 s.h. of graduate credit, earned through course work, and eventually work focused on the completion of a dissertation. The program’s course work 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 Ph.D. in film studies is available on the Department of Cinematic Arts website.

Admission

A faculty committee chaired by the head of film studies evaluates applications to the Ph.D. program. Application materials should include undergraduate and/or graduate transcripts, a personal statement, a writing sample, three letters of recommendation, test scores, 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. Previous experience in the area of film studies is desirable but not required.

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

Career Advancement

The Ph.D. 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 also are 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.