

Documentary Arts and Visual Research, Ph.D.

Center for the Performing and Cinematic Arts / SCHOOL OF THEATER, FILM AND MEDIA ARTS

Learn more about the Doctor of Philosophy in Documentary Arts and Visual Research.

About the Program

The Ph.D. program in Documentary Arts and Visual Research is designed for students who have developed a professional level of technological artistry in sound and image production through the completion of an M.F.A. degree and who want to apply their skills to develop visual research projects or to reflect critically on traditional and digital forms of cinema through scholarship and technological analysis. The Ph.D. program offers M.F.A. graduates the opportunity to use their creative education to take on the intellectual challenge of our technological age: the expression of ideas, once communicated entirely by written means but now through multiple forms of media.

In the Ph.D. program, students explore research questions based in field-based research, critical analysis, and/or history of nonfictional forms in film, media arts, and emerging technologies. The intertwining relationships of theory and practice are at the heart of this interdisciplinary program. Students enter with both a professional mastery production in cinema and media arts or a related field as well as strong scholarly skills. Thus, they can create groundbreaking work that moves fluidly between creative and critical approaches to images and the stories they tell. Doctoral projects may draw from multiple disciplines and research methods in the arts, humanities, and sciences. The projects may take many forms, such as those of critical, digital, and visual research in the humanities, interactive and emergent forms of writing, and cross-disciplinary visual ethnography.

Learning outcomes include the ability to:

- Apply advanced visualization technologies and creative methods in the pursuit of original scholarly research;
- Expand critical research from both theoretical and applied perspectives;
- Pursue scholarly careers in a vital and emerging technological field; and
- Work with research teams that are engaged in digital scholarship and visualization in such diverse fields as anthropology, geography, and media studies.

Time Limit for Degree Completion: 3 years

Campus Location: Main

Full-Time/Part-Time Status: The degree program is expected to be completed on a full-time basis.

Interdisciplinary Study: The program requires students to take one appropriate interdisciplinary elective from inside or outside of the department.

Ranking: Temple's Film and Media Arts graduate programs are ranked among the top 10 film/video programs nationally and within the top three programs offered by public institutions.

Areas of Specialization: Dr. Roderick Coover, Program Director, has been working in the areas of visual research, interactive documentary cinema, and experimental ethnography since the 1990s. Dr. Paul Swann's scholarship focuses on documentary film history, the international culture trade, and media in the city. Dr. Nora Alter publishes books and other critical works on essay films, German nonfiction cinema, and other related topics. Dr. Chris Cagle publishes books and essays on documentary theory and practice. Dr. Kartik Nair's research focuses on the transnational infrastructures of popular visual cultures.

Additionally, many of the program's practice-oriented faculty, including Professors Warren Bass, Peter D'Agostino, Sarah Drury, LeAnn Erickson, Michael Kuetemeyer, David Parry, Eran Preis, Jeff Rush, and Rea Tajiri, make documentary works or works integrating documentary praxis. Students also have opportunities to work with faculty in related departments both within the Center for the Performing and Cinematic Arts and beyond.

Job Prospects: Graduates are prepared for advanced career opportunities in academia, research-based documentary production, cultural institutions/foundations, research institutions, arts curating, emerging media technologies and industries, and critical writing wherein both interdisciplinary and applied perspectives are invaluable.

Non-Matriculated Student Policy: Coursework is limited to those matriculating in the Ph.D. program.

Financing Opportunities: Contact the department directly for more information.

Admission Requirements and Deadlines

Application Deadline:

Fall: December 15

Applications are evaluated together after the deadline has passed. Late applications may be considered for admission.

APPLY ONLINE to this graduate program.

Letters of Reference:

Number Required: 3

From Whom: Letters of recommendation should be obtained from college/university faculty familiar with the applicant's academic competency and/or professionals working in film, media arts, and documentary forms, or other closely related fields.

Coursework Required for Admission Consideration: Students who earned their M.F.A. at a university other than Temple should contact the Ph.D. Program Director, Dr. Roderick Coover, at roderick.coover@temple.edu to ensure that their graduate work prepares them for the Ph.D. degree.

Master's Degree in Discipline/Related Discipline: All applicants must have earned a Master of Fine Arts degree in film or media arts or be in the final year of their M.F.A. program. The Ph.D. program is designed for students seeking to integrate production and theory who have finished their M.F.A. degree by the end of the summer before the Ph.D. program begins.

Bachelor's Degree in Discipline/Related Discipline: All applicants must present credentials that are the equivalent of the appropriate baccalaureate degree at Temple University.

Applicants educated in China should review the information found on the Graduate School website regarding the submission of education documents to Temple University. See <https://grad.temple.edu/admissions/international-applicants/before-you-apply>. The admissions committee for the Documentary Arts and Visual Research Ph.D. program will review your materials to determine your admissions status provided the required documentation is submitted in support of your application.

Statement of Goals: In approximately 500 words, describe your primary goals and areas of interest for your doctoral studies, as well as your long-term professional aims and relevant biographical information.

Standardized Test Scores:

Applicants who earned their baccalaureate degree from an institution where the language of instruction was other than English, with the exception of those who subsequently earned a master's degree at a U.S. institution, must report scores for a standardized test of English that meet these minimums:

- TOEFL iBT: 100
- IELTS Academic: 7.0
- PTE Academic: 68

Portfolio: Applicants must submit a portfolio, which should include work related to their proposed doctoral goals. The applicant's role in each work must be clearly indicated.

Resume: Current resume required.

Writing Sample: Submission of a scholarly writing sample related to the applicant's doctoral goals is also required.

Advanced Standing: The Ph.D. in Documentary Arts and Visual Research program consists of 37 discrete credits taken beyond the M.F.A. degree. At the time of admission, the entire M.F.A. degree serves as advanced standing credits. These credits are not counted toward the 37 required credits of the doctoral degree. However, students may transfer into the doctoral degree up to 6 graduate credits in coursework taken beyond the M.F.A. degree. Typically, this coursework is reviewed after admission to the Ph.D. degree and must be approved by the Film and Media Arts committee.

Program Requirements

General Program Requirements:

Number of Credits Required Beyond the M.F.A.: 37

Required Courses:

Code	Title	Credit Hours
Core Courses		
Select courses from the following that total 11 credits: 11		
FMA 5468	Art-Culture-Technology Seminar ¹	
FMA 5671	Film History and Theory ¹	
FMA 8462	Documentary Arts and Visual Research ¹	
FMA 8680	Advanced Topics in Media Arts Studies	
FMA 9346	Methodologies and Praxis	

Additional FMA Graduate Courses and FMA 9683 Directed Readings ²	17
Non-FMA Graduate Course ²	3
Research Courses ³	6
FMA 9994 Doctoral Comprehensive Exam Study	
FMA 9998 Doctoral Dissertation Proposal	
FMA 9999 Doctoral Dissertation	
Total Credit Hours	37

- ¹ Students who have previously taken FMA 5468, FMA 5671, and/or FMA 8462 are required to substitute a graduate-only course(s) taught by doctoral faculty with approval from the student's advisor and the Program Director.
- ² Students select coursework with approval from the Program Director. An additional 3-credit graduate course taken outside the department may be substituted for 3 credits of FMA required courses and Directed Readings.
- ³ The Graduate School requires that students complete a minimum of 6 research credits that include FMA 9994, FMA 9998, and FMA 9999. Of the 6 credits, at least 2 credits must be earned in FMA 9999.

Culminating Events:

Comprehensive Exam:

The list of examiners must be submitted to the Program Director no later than the first week of the term in which the exam is anticipated. The exam is conducted with at least three doctoral-level faculty of the Graduate School of Temple University. The examination committee chair must be faculty in the Department of Film and Media Arts. Additional doctoral-level examiners are permitted. The exam must be conducted no later than the 14th week of the term in which the exam is anticipated and signed approval must be submitted according to the Graduate School guidelines.

Proposal:

The formation of a dissertation committee must be submitted to the Program Director no later than the first week of the term in which a dissertation proposal is to be submitted. Students develop their dissertation proposal through individual tutorials and group workshops. The dissertation proposal is due no later than March 30. The Dissertation Examining Committee Chair must be a tenured or tenure-track doctoral faculty member from the Department of Film and Media Arts. The dissertation proposal deadline is set by the committee and is conducted according to the Graduate School guidelines.

Dissertation:

Students work with their dissertation advisor to complete the dissertation. Doctoral dissertation projects are to employ the latest visualization technologies.

Early in the term in which a defense of the dissertation is anticipated, the major advisor notifies the Associate Dean that it is time to appoint the Dissertation Examining Committee (DEC). The DEC consists of the Doctoral Advisory Committee (DAC) plus an "outside" reader, who is an additional graduate faculty member from Temple or another university, but not from the faculty of the student's home department.

Doctoral candidates must schedule a defense of the dissertation with the Associate Dean at least one month before the requested defense date. The "Announcement of Dissertation Defense" form, found in TUportal under the Tools tab within "University Forms," must bear all appropriate signatures and be submitted to the Associate Dean.

Two weeks prior to the oral defense, the student submits individual copies of the abstract and the completed dissertation to the Associate Dean and each member of the DEC. The graduate secretary notifies the Graduate School and posts notices of the impending defense on bulletin boards located within the School of Theater, Film and Media Arts. All members of the DEC attend the oral defense and then vote to pass or fail the dissertation and its defense after the conclusion of the public presentation.

Contacts

Program Web Address:

<https://www.temple.edu/academics/degree-programs/documentary-arts-and-visual-research-phd-ca-davr-phd>

Department Information:

Film and Media Arts Graduate Admissions
Center for the Performing and Cinematic Arts/School of Theater, Film and Media Arts
2001 N. 13th Street, 127 Presser Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19122-6016
FilmMFA@temple.edu
215-204-8598
Fax: 215-204-4957

Submission Address for Application Materials:

<https://apply.temple.edu/TFMA/Pages/Welcome.aspx>

Department Contacts:

Admissions:

James Short
Recruitment Coordinator
jshort@temple.edu

Program Director:

Roderick Coover
rcoover@temple.edu

Interim Chair:

Chet Pancake
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