Media Arts and Design

In the early twenty-first century, “media” and “design” have become central terms. Media often refers to a wide range of storage and communication technologies. Design is no longer a term used simply to describe surface aesthetics or ornamentation, but now encompasses a wide range of human interactions with technical devices, environments, and communities that shape daily life. Overall, designed digital and networked media inspire feelings of attachment as well as frustration with few rivals in any contemporary cultural sphere. If you consider the number of screens in your immediate vicinity, it becomes evident how substantial an impact media arts and design have on the ways we learn, work, play, think, act, and communicate.

This minor focuses on these rapid developments in media and design that have changed the character of contemporary life, opening these phenomena up to historical study, theoretical critique, and hands-on experimentation. The minor offers possible pathways through video game design, transmedia puzzle development, digital filmmaking, electronic sound design, digital storytelling, algorithmic theater, podcast development, data visualization, computational imaging, speculative design, and media history and theory.

Minor in Media Arts and Design

Distribution Requirement

The minor is comprised of six courses. Of those six courses, students must take at least one course in each of the following core areas: (1) Media Theory, (2) Media History, and (3) Media Practice and Design.

Courses that qualify for each distribution requirement are listed here (http://collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/thecollege/MediaArtsandDesign/18-19_Media_Arts_Design_Course_List.pdf).

Electives

Students will also need two elective courses from offerings in such areas as video game design, electronic sound design, computational imaging, or speculative design. Any MAAD course may count; students may use outside courses with approval of the director.

Senior Colloquium and Portfolio

To complete the minor, students must enroll in MAAD 29400 Media Arts and Design Capstone Colloquium. As part of the colloquium, each member of this student cohort prepares a portfolio of digital media artworks and/or historical and theoretical writing that they submit by the end of Winter Quarter of their final year.

Summary of Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Units</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One Media Theory course</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>One Media History course</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>One Media Practice and Design course</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two electives</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAAD 29400 Capstone Colloquium</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portfolio</td>
<td>000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Units</td>
<td>600</td>
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Advising and Grading

Prospective minors should meet with the program director as soon as possible to discuss their interests and course plans and to obtain advice and approval. In order to declare the minor, students must complete the Consent to Complete a Minor Program form (https://humanities-web.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/college-prod/s3fs-public/documents/Consent_Minor_Program.pdf) and have the form signed by the program director. This form must then be returned to the student’s College adviser by the end of Spring Quarter of the student’s third year.

Courses in the minor program may not be (1) double counted with the student’s major(s) or with other minors or (2) counted toward general education requirements. Courses in the minor must be taken for quality grades, and more than half of the requirements for the minor must be met by registering for courses bearing University of Chicago course numbers.

Media Arts and Design Courses

MAAD 10904. Media Wars. 100 Units.

Media practices and discourses evoking war or violence are common today, such as the ‘weaponization’ of social media; ‘cyber warfare’ and attacks; ‘online battlefields;’ ‘guerilla’ media tactics; ‘The Great Meme War’ and ‘Infowars.com,’ to name a few. In relationship with terms suggesting that we live in an age of ‘post-truth’ dominated by ‘fake news’ or ‘fact-challenged’ journalism, the media wars of today may seem unique to the twenty-first century. But in fact, the history of the use of media to either combat or spread ideas dates back centuries to the earliest phases of mass media and communication. In this class, we will proceed historically, broadly conceiving of media to include print and visual, cultural, and artistic forms, cinema, television, and the
internet. While we will explore how media have historically been used to construct or counter dominant systems of representation, we will also discuss how different media forms function formally, learning to analyze how they construct discourses of truth as texts (documentary; propaganda). This class will also function as a contemporary research laboratory where students will be asked to track, evaluate, and theorize contemporary or historical media that are taking part in a so-called ‘media war.’

Instructor(s): Jennifer Wild
Terms Offered: Spring

Note(s): Please note: Students who have previously completed the course “Problems in the Study of Gender and Sexuality: Media Wars” are not eligible to receive credit for this class.

Equivalent Course(s): CMST 30904, GNSE 20114, GNSE 30114, CMST 20904, SIGN 26061

MAAD 12320. Critical Videogame Studies. 100 Units.
Since the 1960s, games have arguably blossomed into the world’s most profitable and experimental medium. This course attends specifically to video games, including popular arcade and console games, experimental art games, and educational serious games. Students will analyze both the formal properties and sociopolitical dynamics of video games. Readings by theorists including Ian Bogost, Roger Caillois, Nick Dyer-Witheford, Mary Flanagan, Jane McGonigal, Lisa Nakamura, and Katie Salen will help us think about the growing field of video game studies. This is a 2019-20 Signature Course in the College. (Theory)

Instructor(s): Patrick Jagoda
Terms Offered: Autumn

Equivalent Course(s): EALC 12320, GNSE 22320, SIGN 26038, CMST 27916

MAAD 15620. Japanese Animation: The Making of a Global Media. 100 Units.
This course offers an introduction to Japanese animation, from its origins in the 1910s to its emergence as global culture in the 1990s. The goal is not only to provide insight into Japanese animation within the context of Japan but also to consider those factors that have transformed it into a global cultural form with a diverse, worldwide fanbase. As such, the course approaches Japanese animation from three distinct perspectives on Japanese animation, which are designed to introduce students to three important methodological approaches to contemporary media - film studies, media studies, and fan studies or cultural studies. As we look at Japanese animation in light of these different conceptual frameworks, we will also consider how its transnational dissemination and ‘Asianization’ challenge some of our basic assumptions about global culture, which have been shaped primarily through the lens of Americanization.

Instructor(s): Thomas Lamarre
Terms Offered: Autumn

Equivalent Course(s): EALC 25620, CMST 25620, SIGN 26070

MAAD 15630. Television in an Age of Change. 100 Units.
As streaming options proliferate, we think of television today as a medium in flux, but the history of television-and American television in particular-has been one of change. This course will look at core television concepts both today and in the past, exploring major shifts in television history through its relationships to audiences, technology, and other media.

Instructor(s): Ilana Emmett
Terms Offered: Spring

Equivalent Course(s): CMST 28730

This sequence is required of students majoring in Cinema and Media Studies. Taking these courses in sequence is strongly recommended but not required.

MAAD 18500. History of International Cinema I: Silent Era. 100 Units.
This course provides a survey of the history of cinema from its emergence in the mid-1890s to the transition to sound in the late 1920s. We will examine the cinema as a set of aesthetic, social, technological, national, cultural, and industrial practices as they were exercised and developed during this 30-year span. Especially important for our examination will be the exchange of film techniques, practices, and cultures in an international context. We will also pursue questions related to the historiography of the cinema, and examine early attempts to theorize and account for the cinema as an artistic and social phenomenon.

Instructor(s): A. Field
Terms Offered: Autumn

Prerequisite(s): Prior or concurrent registration in CMST 10100 required. Required of students majoring or minoring in Cinema and Media Studies.

Note(s): For students majoring in Cinema and Media Studies, the entire History of International Cinema three-course sequence must be taken.

Equivalent Course(s): ENGL 48700, ARTH 28500, ARTH 38500, CMLT 22400, ENGL 29300, CMST 48500, CMST 28500, ARTV 20002, CMLT 32400, MAPH 33600

MAAD 18600. History of International Cinema II: Sound Era to 1960. 100 Units.
The center of this course is film style, from the classical scene breakdown to the introduction of deep focus, stylistic experimentation, and technical innovation (sound, wide screen, location shooting). The development of a film culture is also discussed. Texts include Thompson and Bordwell’s Film History: An Introduction; and works by Bazin, Belton, Sitney, and Godard. Screenings include films by Hitchcock, Welles, Rossellini, Bresson, Ozu, Antonioni, and Renoir.

Instructor(s): Staff
Terms Offered: Winter

Prerequisite(s): Prior or concurrent registration in CMST 10100 required. Required of students majoring or minoring in Cinema and Media Studies.
MAAD 18700. History of International Cinema, Part III: 1960 to Present. 100 Units.
This course will continue the study of cinema around the world from the late 1950s through the 1990s. We will focus on New Cinemas in France, Czechoslovakia, Germany, the United States, the United Kingdom, and other countries. We will pay special attention to experimental stylistic developments, women directors, and well-known auteurs. After the New Cinema era we will examine various developments in world cinema, including the rise of Bollywood, East Asian film cultures, and other movements.
Instructor(s): J. Lastra Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): This course follows the subject matter taught in CMST 28500/48500 and CMST 28600/48600, but these are not prerequisites.
Equivalent Course(s): CMST 38700, CMST 28700

MAAD 20500. ARTGAMES. 100 Units.
This studio course playfully explores the methods, tools, and poetics of video games as art. Develop interactive new media art, machinima, and experimental 3D environments by using (and misusing) contemporary game engines. Projects will include hypertext adventures, walking simulators, abstract platformers, and metagames. By hacking, modding, and recontextualizing existing game assets, we will challenge the rules, mechanics, and interfaces of video games.
Instructor(s): J. Satrom Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): ARTV 25403

MAAD 21011. Experimental Captures. 100 Units.
This production-based class will explore the possibilities and limits of capturing the world with imaging approaches that go beyond the conventional camera. What new and experimental image-based artworks can be created with technologies such as laser scanning, structured light projection, time of flight cameras, photogrammetry, stereography, motion capture, sensor augmented cameras or light field photography? This hands-on course welcomes students with production experience while being designed to keep established tools and commercial practices off-kilter and constantly in question.
Instructor(s): M. Downie Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): ARTV 37923, CMST 37011, ARTV 27923, CMST 27011

MAAD 21500. Metamedia. 100 Units.
Computers dynamically simulate the details of any other medium. This course looks past traditional media to engage with the computer as a ‘metamedium'; an environment with infinite degrees of representation. Relationships between form and content will be explored and exploited through deconstructing, augmenting, and experimenting with the data that makes up digital media. Studio time will be spent digitally improvising with expanded approaches to creating new media art. Topics surveyed will include: algorithms as art, metadata as content, and our digital shadows. In addition to making new media art, we will consider our relationship to contemporary media and the politics of digital agency in our connected world.
Instructor(s): J. Satrom
Equivalent Course(s): ARTV 25403

MAAD 21900. Climate Change in Media and Design. 100 Units.
If meteorological data and models show us that climate change is real, art and literature explore what it means for our collective human life. This is the premise of many recent films, novels, and artworks that ask how a changing climate will affect human society. In this course, we will examine the aesthetics of climate change across media, in order to understand how narrative, image, and even sound help us witness a planetary disaster that is often imperceptible. Rather than merely analyzing or theorizing various futures, this course will prepare students in hands-on methods of ‘speculative design’ and ‘critical making.’ Each Tuesday, we will study how art and literature draw on the specific capacities of written and visual media to represent climate impacts, and how new humanities research is addressing climate change.
Each Thursday, we will participate in short artistic exercises that explore futures of each area. These exercises include future object design, body mapping, and story circles, tabletop gameplay, and serious game design. Throughout the quarter, guest speakers from across the humanities, sciences, and social sciences will visit the class to speak about how their disciplines are working to understand and mitigate climate impacts. The most substantial work of the quarter will be an ambitious multimedia or transmedia project about one of the core course topics to be completed in a team.
Instructor(s): P. Jagoda, B. Morgan
Terms Offered: Not offered in 2020-2021
Prerequisite(s): Third- or fourth-year standing
Equivalent Course(s): ENGL 27904, ENST 27900, BPRO 27900, CMST 27814

MAAD 22911. Augmented Reality Production. 100 Units.
Focusing on experimental moving-image approaches at a crucial moment in the emerging medium of augmented reality, this class will explore and interrogate each stage of production of AR works. Students in this production-based class will examine the techniques and opportunities of this new kind of moving image. During this class we'll study the construction of examples across a gamut from locative media, journalism, and gameplay-based works to museum installations. Students will complete a series of critical essays and sketches towards a final augmented reality project using a custom set of software tools developed in and for the class.
MAAD 23220. Inventing, Engineering and Understanding Interactive Devices. 100 Units.
A physical computing class, dedicated to micro-controllers, sensors, actuators and fabrication techniques. The objective is that everyone creates their own, custom-made, functional I/O device.
Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): CMSC 15400
Equivalent Course(s): CMSC 23220

MAAD 24550. Evolution of Improvisation in Chicago. 100 Units.
This course traces the history of improvisation for performance, beginning with the ‘High Priestess’ Viola Spolin’s work exploring the educational and social benefits of play at Hull House through Paul Sill’s development of The Compass Players in Hyde Park to include current companies including Second City, The Neo Futurists, The Annoyance, and IO. The course will include attendance at performances, student presentations, and practice-based workshops.
Instructor(s): H. Coleman Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): TAPS 34550, TAPS 24550

MAAD 24920. Virtual Reality Production. 100 Units.
Focusing on experimental moving-image approaches at a crucial moment in the emerging medium of virtual reality, this class will explore and interrogate each stage of production for VR. By hacking their way around the barriers and conventions of current software and hardware to create new optical experiences, students will design, construct and deploy new ways of capturing the world with cameras and develop new strategies and interactive logics for placing images into virtual spaces. Underpinning these explorations will be a careful discussion, dissection and reconstruction of techniques found in the emerging VR ‘canon’ that spans new modes of journalism and documentary, computer games, and narrative ‘VR cinema.’ Film production and computer programming experience is welcome but not a prerequisite for the course. Students will be expected to complete short ‘sketches’ of approaches in VR towards a final short VR experience.
Instructor(s): M. Downie Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): Film production and computer programming experience is welcome but not a prerequisite for the course. Students will be expected to complete short ‘sketches’ of approaches in VR towards a final short VR experience.
Equivalent Course(s): ARTV 37920, ARTV 27920, CMST 37920, CMST 27920

MAAD 26210. Media Art and Design Practice. 100 Units.
This studio-based course explores the practice, conventions, and boundaries of contemporary media art and design. This can encompass areas as diverse as interactive installation, app design, and the Internet meme. Through projects and critical discussion, students engage with the problems and opportunities of digitally driven content creation. Fundamental elements of digital production are introduced, including basic properties of image, video, and the global network. Further topics as varied as–though not limited to–web production, digital fabrication, interfaces, the glitch, and gaming may be considered. Sections will vary based on the instructor’s fields of expertise.
Instructor(s): J. Satrom Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): HUMA 16000 and HUMA 16100 or instructor consent
Note(s): This course meets the general education requirement in the arts. This course may not double count for general education requirements and the Media Arts and Design minor.
Equivalent Course(s): ARTV 16210

MAAD 27558. No Future: Visual Media and Contemporary Life. 100 Units.
No Future seeks to establish the grounds by which we might examine both contemporary and classic theories of the FUTURE—and its perhaps its negation—through visual media and the production of art in the age of algorithmic capital. We will use this course as a means to consider new forms of subjectivity that arise as effect and response to mutating forms of power and control—and more importantly, how we might refuse these mechanisms. Speeding through (art) history with stops at such examples as the Italian Futurists and their violent reimaginaion of the human as a productive machine to the Situationists who vowed never to produce again, we will examine the fluxes and flows of subjectivity in the movement from factory Taylorization and Fordist production to the inmaterial labor of late stage capitalism. We will discuss issues of work and automation, image production and the labor of the artist, climate change, gender and sexuality, punk, and the economies of inhuman desire that drive our contemporary and future societies. But what is left of the future? Is it already over?
Instructor(s): Andrew Pettinelli Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): This class will present theory that might be new to us; yet, it should remain our goal to work together to think through these texts and visual texts collectively, utilizing the classroom as a space for collaboration and experimentation.
Equivalent Course(s): CMST 27558

MAAD 29400. Media Arts and Design Capstone Colloquium. 100 Units.
In this capstone colloquium, students will prepare a portfolio of digital media artworks and/or historical and theoretical writing that reflect their interests.
Instructor(s): J. Satrom
Prerequisite(s): Consent of instructor.
Note(s): This course is required for students completing a minor in Media Arts and Design and must be completed no later than Winter Quarter of the fourth year. The course will meet weekly throughout the quarter.