

JOINT BA/MA IN DIGITAL STUDIES OF LANGUAGE, CULTURE, AND HISTORY

Department Website: <https://digitalstudies.uchicago.edu/bama> (<https://digitalstudies.uchicago.edu/bama/>)

ABOUT

The Digital Studies of Language, Culture, and History curriculum is designed to develop not only technical programming skills, but a deeper understanding of the complexities and cultural implications of technology across a broad range of academic disciplines. Students in the Digital Studies program will discover how to use a wide variety of powerful software tools while learning how to think about computing from a humanistic perspective.

The Master of Arts Program in Digital Studies of Language, Culture, and History allows students in the College to combine a BA program in an undergraduate major with an interdisciplinary MA program in Digital Studies. The MA program allows students flexibility to explore interests in a number of areas, including textual analysis, computational linguistics, historical or cultural studies, and digital arts and media.

WHERE TO BEGIN

Qualified students in the College who wish to pursue a joint BA/MA degree in Digital Studies should consult with their College adviser followed by conversations with the Digital Studies academic director and the Dean of Students Office in the Division of the Humanities. Interested students are advised to begin these discussions by the end of their second year in the College.

Potential applicants should meet with their College adviser during the Autumn Quarter of their third year to confirm that they are far enough along in their College program to complete the course requirements for both degrees within four years.

ELIGIBILITY

Permission to receive concurrent BA/MA degrees in Digital Studies is a privilege extended only to those undergraduate students who have demonstrated a record of uncommon excellence and who are sufficiently advanced in the fulfillment of the undergraduate degree requirements. The academic demands on these students are significant, and applicants are carefully reviewed in the context of both their undergraduate major and the Digital Studies degree requirements.

- Applicants should have a GPA of 3.55 or higher for their undergraduate work and are expected to have entered their major.
- Applicants are expected to have completed 39 of the 42 courses required for graduation, including all general education requirements (exceptions must be approved by the Digital Studies academic director), before entering concurrent residence status for the three quarters preceding the anticipated quarter of graduation.

HOW TO APPLY

Interested students should apply through the Humanities online graduate application at <https://humanities.uchicago.edu/students/admissions/apply-now> (<https://humanities.uchicago.edu/students/admissions/apply-now/>). The application must be submitted by February 1 in order for the student to be informed of the admission decision before the end of the Winter Quarter.

Applicants must submit the following items:

- MA application
- Statement of academic purpose
- Two letters of recommendation
- Official transcript(s)

Applicants are not required to pay the application fee nor are they required to sit for the Graduate Record Examination (GRE).

Applicants will be interviewed by the Digital Studies academic director. These conversations will focus on the program's requirements and the applicant's qualifications and objectives.

The application is evaluated by the admissions committee of the MA program on the basis of the student's academic record, letters of recommendation, and personal statement of intellectual and academic goals. Admission to the MA program is highly competitive and subject to approval by the College.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Course Requirements

- Students pursuing the joint BA/MA in Digital Studies are required to complete the seven core courses and three elective courses prescribed for the MA in Digital Studies, and to complete a thesis project. Courses taken prior to entering the BA/MA program may be counted as electives to fulfill this requirement, subject to approval by the Director of Digital Studies, provided that they are not double-counted to fulfill the requirements of another program.
- The elective course(s) must have a digital component and are subject to approval by the Digital Studies academic director. A list of approved electives can be found on the Digital Studies (<https://digitalstudies.uchicago.edu>) website. Courses taken prior to entry into the MA program may be counted as electives to fulfill this requirement.
- Digital Studies BA/MA students must complete an introductory programming course prior to entering their fourth year. DIGS 20001 Introduction to Computer Programming is offered every Spring Quarter and is recommended as it is tailored for Digital Studies students, but students are also welcome to take an equivalent Computer Science course such as CMSC 12100 Computer Science with Applications I, CMSC 15100 Introduction to Computer Science I, or CMSC 16100 Honors Introduction to Computer Science I to fulfill this requirement.
- DIGS 20002 Data Analysis for the Humanities I (currently offered in the Autumn Quarter) or STAT 22000 Statistical Methods and Applications (currently available every quarter) may also be taken as an undergraduate prior to the student's fourth year, or DIGS 30002 must be taken in the Autumn Quarter of the student's fourth year. An introduction to statistics is a prerequisite for subsequent courses in the program.
- Students who have taken CMSC 12100, CMSC 15100, CMSC 16100, and/or STAT 22000 as part of their major requirements may substitute additional electives for these courses as approved by the academic director.

Course Sequence

The elective course may be taken in any quarter, subject to its own prerequisites.

Spring Quarter (or previously)

- DIGS 20001 Introduction to Computer Programming (or equivalent Computer Science introductory course); an introduction to programming is a prerequisite for subsequent courses in the program.

Autumn Quarter

- DIGS 30002 Data Analysis for the Humanities I; required only if the student has not previously completed STAT 22000 or DIGS 20002
- DIGS 30003 Data Management for the Humanities
- DIGS 30007 Introduction to Digital Humanities

Winter Quarter

- DIGS 30004 Data Analysis for the Humanities II
- DIGS 30005 Data Publication for the Humanities

Spring Quarter

- DIGS 30006 Natural Language Processing

THESIS PROJECT

The Digital Studies MA program entails a thesis project advised by a University of Chicago faculty member, instructional professor, or lecturer. Information about the thesis requirement and related deadlines can be found on the Digital Studies MA Thesis webpage (<https://digitalstudies.uchicago.edu/thesis/>).

BA/MA students who are pursuing a BA major in which a BA paper or senior thesis is required may do an MA thesis project on a topic related to the BA paper, subject to the approval of their BA adviser and the Director of Digital Studies, with the understanding that the MA thesis will entail substantial additional research and analysis.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Students who begin work towards the MA degree in Digital Studies and then leave the University without completing the program will not be allowed to complete the MA in Digital Studies at a later date.
- Once a student has begun to pursue both the BA degree and the MA degree in Digital Studies, a leave of absence is not normally possible. Students who find that they must take a leave of absence for a medical or family emergency during this period must obtain the approval of the dean of students in the Humanities as well as the dean of students in the College.

- Admissions decisions are usually not released before College preregistration for the following year takes place. Admissions committees often wish to see Winter Quarter grades before making decisions. Thus, applicants should preregister for the coming academic year as usual.

