

Film and Media Studies, Ph.D.

The Film and Media Studies Ph.D. program is dedicated to understanding film, television, and digital media texts in relation to questions of power, inequality, and difference. Students are encouraged to think critically about questions of aesthetics, production, and cultural meaning as they manifest in film, television, and digital media both past and present. Students in the Ph.D. program gain a foundation in the humanities-based discipline of Film and Media Studies while also developing innovative research projects that interrogate media in relation to race, gender/sexuality, nation, religion, ability, and other constructions of difference.

Applications for admission are accepted in the fall quarter only. Complete applications include:

- A statement of purpose (1,200 words maximum) that describes research interests and reasons for seeking a Ph.D. The statement of purpose should indicate how proposed research correlates to the program's emphases and how student's benefit from working with core faculty.
- A personal history statement (1,200 words maximum) that describe educational accomplishments and goals. Applicants should communicate whether they have experienced unique or significant opportunities, challenges, and/or obstacles in the pursuit of an education. Applicants should describe the career paths they plan to pursue after graduation.
- A sample of academic writing, approximately 20 pages in length, that demonstrates original thinking and clear writing.
- Three letters of recommendation, preferably from faculty with whom the applicants have studied.
- Transcripts.
- Results of the TOEFL or IELTS exam for international applicants for whom English is not their primary language.

View the online application (<https://apply.grad.uci.edu/apply/>).

For questions about the program or the application process, please email FMSPHD@uci.edu (FMSPHD@uci.edu).

A. Required core courses:	
FLM&MDA 285A	Film Studies: Theory and Methods
FLM&MDA 285B	Television Studies: Theory and Methods
FLM&MDA 285C	Digital Media and Game Studies: Theory and Methods
FLM&MDA 286A	Film and Media Studies Historiography
FLM&MDA 286B	Media/Power/Culture
FLM&MDA 286C	Topics in Critical Approaches to Film and Media Studies
B. Select seven elective courses:	
Students must take three elective courses from within the Department of Film and Media Studies (FLM&MDA 291, FLM&MDA 292, FLM&MDA 295) and two outside the Department. The remaining two electives can be taken within or outside the department.	
Students entering with a M.A. may petition to have up to three elective courses waived, subject to the approval of Graduate Division. Students who have had three courses waived must take two elective courses from within the Department of Film and Media Studies and one outside the department. The remaining elective can be taken within or outside the department.	
C. Required practicums in Film and Media Studies:	
FLM&MDA 287	Practicum in Pedagogy
FLM&MDA 288A	Practicum in Professionalization I
FLM&MDA 288B	Practicum in Professionalization II
FLM&MDA 288C	Practicum in Professionalization III
D. Required supporting course:	
FLM&MDA 298	Prospectus Writing Practicum

First-Year Review

Students are required to select and confirm their Primary Advisor by the end of the first year.

At the end of the spring quarter, the Film and Media Studies faculty reviews the performance and progress of each first-year student and provides written evaluation of their work. This evaluation includes an assessment of the student's ability to complete independent research.

A positive assessment indicates that the student is making good progress.

A cautionary assessment is accompanied by a description of specific improvements that a student must make in order to advance to candidacy in the third year.

A negative overall assessment places the student on Academic Conditional Status. Faculty gives written feedback with specific areas for improvement and a timeline for future expectations of academic progress. Students who fail to demonstrate improvement may be recommended for dismissal from the program without a degree.

MA Requirements

All students apply for and are accepted into the doctoral program.

Students who enter the Ph.D. program with a prior graduate degree (M.A. or beyond) in Film and Media Studies or a related discipline may petition to waive the M.A. exam requirement in recognition of their prior degree; normatively, this is approved. In these cases, students do not complete the M.A. exam requirement nor earn a second M.A. en route to the Ph.D. Film and Media Studies faculty determine what graduate degree fields qualify as related disciplines. Students entering with an M.F.A. typically are required to complete the M.A. exam unless the Graduate Committee determines that the degree is equivalent to an M.A.

Students who have not earned an M.A. in a relevant field prior to matriculating in the Film and Media Studies Ph.D. program must earn an M.A. degree as part of the Ph.D. program. The program does not offer a stand-alone or terminal M.A., except in instances when a student does not continue in the program toward earning the Ph.D.

To earn the M.A. degree, the student must:

A. Complete six foundational courses:	
FLM&MDA 285A	Film Studies: Theory and Methods
FLM&MDA 285B	Television Studies: Theory and Methods
FLM&MDA 285C	Digital Media and Game Studies: Theory and Methods
FLM&MDA 286A	Film and Media Studies Historiography
FLM&MDA 286B	Media/Power/Culture
FLM&MDA 286C	Topics in Critical Approaches to Film and Media Studies
B. Complete:	
FLM&MDA 287	Practicum in Pedagogy
C. Complete seven electives (three must be within the Department of Film and Media Studies and two outside the Department of Film and Media Studies)	

- Pass the M.A. Exam
- File the necessary paperwork for conferral of degree with Graduate Division.

For the M.A. exam, the student revises one seminar paper written while in the program and submits the revised paper before the start of the spring quarter in their second year of study.

The requirements for passing the M.A. exam are as follows:

- The revised paper must present a substantive and original argument;
- It must reflect substantial revision from the original paper, demonstrating additional research and/or reconceptualization and responsiveness to feedback;
- It must demonstrate a command of the relevant literature;
- It must present adequate evidence to support its claims;
- It must be clearly written in an appropriate academic style; and
- It must be formatted according to MLA or Chicago Manual of Style guidelines with proper citation and bibliography.

This paper is evaluated by a three-person M.A. committee, which consists of the student's primary advisor as chair and two additional department faculty members appointed by the Program Director in consultation with the student and the advisor. The committee unanimously decides whether the student has passed the M.A. exam and if they are eligible to proceed toward the Ph.D., taking into holistic account the exam (revised paper) results, input from the core Film and Media Studies faculty during the First-Year Review, and the student's progress during the second year of course work. There are four possible determinations:

- Positive: The student earns the M.A. and qualifies to continue toward the Ph.D. exams.
- Cautionary: The student earns the M.A. and qualifies to continue toward the Ph.D. exams but with areas for improvement communicated in writing to the student and advisor. This occurs when the student's holistic performance and promise outweigh a borderline exam or vice versa.
- M.A. Only: The student earns the M.A. but is disqualified from continuing toward the Ph.D. exams. This occurs when the student's holistic performance and promise do not outweigh a borderline exam.
- Negative: The exam is unacceptable. The student does not earn the M.A. and is disqualified from continuing toward the Ph.D. exams.

Students may revise and resubmit the M.A. paper one additional time in case of a failure to pass.

Language Requirement

Students will consult with the program director and their principal advisor(s) to determine whether they must demonstrate or develop proficiency in a second language for their research.¹ If the program director and principal advisor(s) determine that proficiency in a second language is required, the student must demonstrate this proficiency prior to advancing to candidacy. In the event a student does not need a second language to conduct doctoral research, they are not required to demonstrate proficiency in a second language.

If determined to be required, the language requirement may be satisfied by one of the following means:

- a. By passing the Film and Media Studies translation exam. A request must be made to the Film and Media Studies staff within the first two weeks of the quarter the student wishes to take the exam.
- b. By completing, with a grade of B or better, a language course at the 2C level or equivalent, with the exception of Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, which must be completed at the 3C level or equivalent.
- c. By attaining a proficiency level of 2C on the Russian Exemption Exam or a proficiency level of 3C on the Chinese Exemption Exam offered by UCI's Academic Testing Center.
- d. By petitioning the program. Grounds for a petition might include the student's being a native speaker in a language other than English or having completed an equivalent language requirement at a different institution. The granting of this petition remains at the discretion of the Graduate Director, although students dissatisfied with this determination may request the petition be considered by the full faculty. Students who have completed the language requirement at a different institution need to submit transcripts with the petition. Students inquire with the Graduate Coordinator to complete a petition.

¹ Examples of when a second language would likely be necessary include Spanish proficiency for the study of Spanish-language media, Mandarin proficiency for study of media in Mainland China, or the relevant language for a project on non-English language transnational/diasporic media.

Preliminary Examination

By the end of their second year, students work with their advisor to plan their Examination fields for the following year. No later than the end of winter in the third year of study, students establish a three-person Qualifying Exam Committee, at least 51 percent of whose members, including the Dissertation Advisor, must be core faculty in the Department of Film and Media Studies.

The student receives one standardized bibliography and selects two specialty field bibliographies on which they are examined. In the fall and winter quarters of the third year, the student will enroll in FLM&MDA 296 and complete reading the works on these three bibliographies. The three exam areas should serve to help the student define general areas of specialized competence that aid them in establishing a broad base for the dissertation and in developing college-level courses. Students may not enroll in FLM&MDA 296 until all their other course requirements (with the exception of FLM&MDA 298) have been completed.

The Qualifying Examination is administered by the Qualifying Exam Committee and includes both a written and an oral component. The written component consists of at least one question for each exam bibliography for which the student has completed readings. Students write at least one essay for each respective exam. Faculty may offer a range of questions for each bibliography, giving the student a choice of which question(s) to answer. The written component is offered as a series of three remote exams to be completed within three respective 24-hour periods; questions and responses are delivered electronically. The oral component of the exam takes place in conjunction with the Prospectus Defense during the spring quarter of the student's third year.

Dissertation Prospectus and Advancement to Ph.D. Candidacy

The student will enroll in FLM&MDA 298 and complete a prospectus that identifies the scope, approach, and rationale for their proposed dissertation. The student presents an oral defense of the prospectus to the Qualifying Exam Committee. When the prospectus has been unanimously approved by the Qualifying Exam Committee, the student is advanced to doctoral candidacy. Students should have taken their preliminary examination, defended their dissertation prospectus, and advanced to doctoral candidacy no later than the end of spring quarter of their third year. If a student exceeds the three-year normative time to candidacy, they must petition by spring quarter of their third year for an exception, presenting an approved plan for timely progress to candidacy.

If a student does not pass the qualifying examination, consistent with UCI policy (Academic Senate Regulation 467) the student will be allowed one repeat attempt of the examination. This repeat examination will occur during the quarter following the initial examination.