



Master of Fine Arts Program

Welcome to the Master of Fine Arts Program in the Department of Art at the University of Delaware. This handbook is designed to begin to answer some of the practical and programmatic questions you might have as a MFA student.

Program Focus and Curriculum

The focus of this graduate program is working with the student to develop a solid and sustainable studio practice. We accept students on the premise that they want to build a studio practice and work to realize their personal visions. It is the belief of the graduate faculty that success in the highly competitive field of art is premised on the strength of the artwork and the artist's active participation in the local and global discussion of the ideas surrounding creative activity. We work to maintain a high level of discussion about what constitutes a powerful artistic practice and product.

The MFA curriculum consists of three distinct yet interrelated parts of the graduate experience and education: research, practice, and discourse. They are asked to keep up a dedicated studio practice that pushes and challenges their interests, and they come together for critique that encourages the open exchange of ideas in a collaborative environment. In addition, students are asked to take an academic course outside of the department in order to assist and expand studio research.

As a studio program the structure determined by the graduate faculty is oriented toward extensive personal time in the studio, supported by one-on-one discussions with faculty and visiting artists.

Graduate Faculty

Troy Richards – Graduate Program Director

Virginia Bradley

Abby Donovan

Janet Hethorn

Amy Hicks

Lance Winn

Rene Marquez

David Meyer

Bob Straight

Peter Williams

Graduate Students work with the primary guidance of three advisors each. For the first year these advisors are assigned to the student, second year MFA students select their advisors (dependent upon availability). Advisors and students meet individually for a recommended hour every two weeks. These visits are intended to give varied viewpoints on the student's work. This process is conceived as an informal dialogue between working artists, and might consist of encouragement to pursue certain direction but does not result in assignments or structured requirements.

It is the student's responsibility to maintain contact with the assigned advisors and it is recommended to establish a schedule of regular meetings early in the semester. Consistent dialog with the advisors will help ensure a student-directed education. The student can, and should, take advantage of the feedback of professors who are her advisors by setting up studio visits or inviting them to group critiques where her work will be discussed.

Required Courses, 15 credits each semester

Fall Semester	Spring Semester
1st year ART 600, Graduate Critique, 3 cr. ART 677, Critical Issues Seminar, 3 cr. ART 679, Graduate Studio, 9 cr.	1st year ART 600, Graduate Critique, 3 cr. ART 678, Research Seminar, 3 cr. ART 679, Graduate Studio, 9 cr.
2nd year ART 600, Graduate Critique, 3 cr. ART 679, Graduate Studio, 9 cr. 3 cr. course selected from outside the department	2nd year ART 600, Graduate Critique, 3 cr. ART 679, Graduate Studio, 6 cr. ART 698, MFA Exhibition, 3 cr. ART 699, MFA Supporting Paper, 3 cr.

ART 679- Graduate Studio (all 4 semesters)

The student's three advisors, determine the grade of the Graduate Studio with input from the graduate faculty as a whole, after the reviews at the end of each semester. When registering for courses each student will select an assigned lead instructor, from the list of available faculty, who will be responsible for submitting her grade.

Creative practices will take on different forms, but we expect the consistent and dedicated pursuit of personal work. The department does not set specific required studio hours, but the College Art Association determined that each credit of studio practice would equal three hours of work a week, so 9 studio credits equals 27 hours a week in the studio. We strongly encourage the student to take advantage of the time here to work as much as possible.

ART 677, Critical Issues Seminar

ART 678, Research Seminar

The two seminar classes for first year graduate students introduce methods of research and encourage discussion that examines proposed ideas.

ART 600, Graduate Critique

Our graduates take one group critique class during each of their four semesters in the MFA program. All students participate in each critique so that each student's work might receive the broadest range of feedback. This approach reflects the conditions of the "Art World" and world in general where, in general, artworks are not separated by medium or discipline, but critiqued and appreciated for the power they possess as art.

3 cr. course selected from outside the department

The third semester of the MFA program students register for a class outside of the department to fulfill the last of their academic credit requirements. More importantly this presents the student the opportunity to make use of the larger University resources that she might expand her thinking and personal research.

The student should find a course of interest that will support her individual research. While the course does not need to be at the 600 level it is recommended that it not be below the 400 level, though exceptions can be made This comes from the Graduate Studies guidelines:

Students should register for the class in the spring during fall registration. Finding courses later in the summer or just prior to the beginning of the school year can be difficult and may result in less desirable choices.

To register for the course:

1. The student requests permission from the faculty teaching the course.
2. Upon receiving permission the office of the department of the course must enroll the student using the departmental number of 666. For example, a graduate student who attends PSYC 425 and fulfills additional graduate level requirements to earn graduate credit should register for PSYC 666, not PSYC 425.
3. The student may process a titling form for the 666 numbered course.

If the faculty or outside department does not approve you taking the course then, unfortunately you will have to find another option.

ART 698, MFA Exhibition

The MFA thesis show is intended to reflect the development of each artist's work over their two years in graduate school and should suggest a set of investigations that are sustainable after graduate school.

ART 699, MFA Supporting Paper

The written thesis should describe, in depth and detail: the student's artwork and studio practice, clearly delineate its underlying concepts and ideas, and provide a context for this work within an art and cultural history.

The MFA thesis is meant to be a "support paper" that attempts to frame and defend work that culminates in the thesis show. The paper has many of the demands of a traditional thesis but with less writing (12-15 written pages plus documentation of work). It constitutes one half of the thesis requirement with the other half being the work completed in the studio during the two years of graduate study.

At the beginning of the second year the student must build a thesis committee consisting of her present and former graduate advisors. This committee should include

a lead reader plus two other readers who should help direct you in the development of your support paper. A first completed draft is due to your committee members for review and comment the first week of February. The final paper is due the day after spring break when it should be approved and signed by the student's committee members. At that point the final paper should be submitted to the office.

Reviews

At the end of each of the four semesters during the graduate program there is a review of the student's work by the entire graduate faculty. These individual reviews run 30 to 45 minutes and culminate with feedback and a group recommendation of pass, pass with warning, or probation. If the student is put on probation he or she has a semester to change their effort according to the recommendations of the graduate faculty. Both the Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs) and Tuition Scholarships are merit-based and contingent on the successful reviews. Final second year reviews take place prior to the MFA thesis exhibition.

Applying for the MFA Degree

In order to receive your diploma, you must submit an "application for advanced degrees" to the University's Office of Graduate Studies by February 15, 2012. You can download the application from their website. <http://www.udel.edu/gradoffice>

Studio Areas and Responsibilities

Individual Studio Protocol

First-year graduate students may move into their studios in August 1. Second-year students must vacate their studios by July 15 with everything returned to "move in" conditions. Keys and space use contracts are available from Nate Sherman, Facilities Coordinator. All graduate students are allowed, and encouraged, to be in their studios over the summer and winter breaks.

Your studios are the property of the University of Delaware and, while it is *not* encouraged, may be entered by employees of the University of Delaware. Your studio is given to you with the understanding that it will be used as a space to conduct your M.F.A. research. Though it is understood that creative research can be extremely broad we ask that you respect the space allocated to you; that you do nothing to the structure that cannot be returned to its previous condition; that you do not bring pets into your space; and that your space not be treated as a residence—which is simply to say that you should take advantage of the studios to make work.

Studio Area Responsibilities

All Graduate students are required to contribute to general upkeep and studio maintenance. The particular details of these expectations will be outlined by Studio Area Heads (graduate faculty in charge of the various areas). The Chair and the Graduate

Coordinators will assign additional responsibilities to those students with GTA appointments.

All graduate students with studios in the 3D areas (sculpture and ceramics) are required to get their certification on the forklift. This should be done within the first couple weeks of school and requires a scintillating class taken through the facilities department. Please contact our Facilities Coordinator, Nate Sherman, for details.

Please exercise caution and safety in the studio and when operating any equipment. Graduate students have 24-hour access to studios, but do not allow strangers into the buildings after hours.

Resources

Desks, chairs, and other random outdated paraphernalia can be found for FREE at the General Services building- see Nate for assistance. There is also a most useful dumpsite behind the Studio Arts Building.

You will find Morris Library to be an excellent resource for your research. Be sure to check out the Special Collections and become familiar with the electronic databases. You might find especially useful JStor, which will allow you to find all of those obscure articles that have been eluding your grasp.

Questions about computer software and/or issues with hardware can and should be taken to the IT Help Center. Look for them online or call them at (302) 831-6000. They have thousands of online tutorials that UD faculty and students can use for free.

www.udel.edu/help

Graduate students are responsible for the purchase of any materials needed for the creation of artwork. The UD does not have an art supply store in the department (and Delaware does not have one in the entire state), but students should see this as an opportunity to visit Philadelphia.

Policies

The [University of Delaware's policy on alcohol](#) in the Art Department buildings.

The University policy prohibits the use of alcohol as follows: The possession, use, consumption, manufacture, sale, or distribution of alcohol in any University building, facility, or property except in the confines of a student's own residence hall room if the student is 21 years of age.

The use of your studio as a graduate student is a privilege. Abuse of the University alcohol policy can lead to a student being denied the use of their studio. This means that you must not consume alcohol in your studios. No exceptions.

MFA Graduate Student Funding Policy

The MFA Degree at the University of Delaware is usually a two-year program. Funding is awarded to applicants and continuing students on a competitive basis.

1. Incoming students are awarded funding on the following qualifications:
 - a. Quality of artistic work, artist statement
 - b. Letters of recommendation
 - c. Transcripts
 - d. Departmental priorities (including teaching and studio coordination)
 - e. Recommendation of the Graduate Faculty and Coordinator

2. Continuing second year students are awarded funding on the following qualifications:
 - a. Performance in the first year of the MFA Program
 - 1) Quality of artistic development and vision
 - 2) Successful completion of the 30-hour review
 - 3) Teaching evaluations when applicable
 - b. Recommendation of the Graduate Faculty and Coordinator
 - c. Departmental priorities (including teaching and studio coordination)
 - d. Adherence to University, Department and studio policies

3. The Department does not award Funding to students who do not complete the program in the initial two years.

Grad TA activities and time expectations

Those students who are awarded Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTA) are expected to follow the guidelines regarding this as found at:

<http://www.udel.edu/gradoffice/financial/index.html>

Click on “assistantships” and read the descriptions under “Teaching Assistants” and “Graduate Assistants”.

Typically the GTA assignments within the Department of Art include teaching one class plus 10 hours of assistance to the department in the form of either studio or project support. This may vary, as some might be assigned to teaching two classes, or another mixture of assignments. All fully funded GTA awards have the expectation of working approximately 20 hours a week.

The GTA assignments are based on experience and performance, as well as contribution to the student’s goals. Decisions on particular assignments are made by the Department Chair and the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Assignment of Teaching for Summer and Winter-session Classes

In the attempt to help each of our graduate students with the opportunity for funding and teaching experience we work to follow these basic guidelines for the assignment of Winter and Summer classes:

- Second Year MFA's (in order from those who have received the least to the most previous funding) have first dibs to teach Winter-session classes.
- First year MFA's (again, in order, from those who have received the least to the most previous funding) have first dibs to teach Summer classes.

You need to let the Graduate Coordinator know, as soon as possible during the year, if you are interested in additional teaching, so that we can compile a list and distribute any available classes accordingly.

Communication Policies

A basic chain of contact should be followed in order to save time and limit unnecessary e-mails or phone calls. Most problems or other concerns should be able to be solved with the student's Advisors or Studio Area Heads. If there are programmatic issues that cannot be solved with by these resources then the student should contact the Graduate Coordinator who will bring any broader departmental concerns to the Chair as needed.

Any concerns or questions regarding your funding, pay schedule, or contracts need to be directed to Cindy Delaney, the Assistant to the Chair. Any questions regarding courses or registration issues please see Jennifer Tuerke, Staff Assistant.

We hope that this simple chain of communication (Advisors/Studio Area Heads, Graduate Coordinator, Chair) will make it as easy as possible to get the information and help that you need.

Basic Office Policies

Department Office Hours

The office is open from 8:00 a.m. till 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.
No new work or requests will be processed after 4:30 p.m. in any one given day.

Mail and UPS Deliveries

Campus mail is picked up and delivered once a day to the art office around 10:30 a.m. every day. UPS shipments are usually received between 12:00 and 1:00 p.m. each day. Please check your mailbox on a daily basis. The outgoing mailbox is located to the left of the mailboxes. If you are mailing a package or more than 10 first class (#10) envelopes at one time, the office staff must be informed of this for budgetary reasons.

Should you be expecting a large package, please check the office regularly to see if it has come in and remove it from the mailbox area as soon as it arrives. We cannot be

responsible for your packages, and we do not have the space to house large packages for more than 24 hours.

Should you miss the morning mail pick-up, there is a large white mailbox located on the east side of Old College where you can place your outgoing mail. It will be picked up there at approximately 3:30 p.m. every day.

Photo Copying

The department copy machine is located near the mailboxes and is available only for small copying jobs. No more than 20 copies are permitted per original and no more than two originals may be copied.

Any photocopying beyond 20 copies should be taken to the Graphic Communication Center (GCC), located downstairs in the Trabant University Center. You may also send it to the central GCC location by campus mail. Forms for this service may be obtained from Cindy Delaney, Assistant to the Chair. Copies are usually ready at Trabant within 15 minutes to an hour, depending on the size of the job. Prior planning can make this a very easy process.