

ACADEMICS / GRADUATE / DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (MFA)

Curriculum

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (MFA) PROGRAM

The Master of Fine Arts in Design and Technology is awarded to students who have completed 64 credits. A maximum of six credits of graduate-level work may be transferred. Students must attain a 3.0 cumulative grade point average and fulfill all requirements.

FIRST YEAR / SUMMER

Boot Camp	0
	0

FIRST YEAR / FALL

PGTE 5200 Major Studio 1	6
PLDS 5400/5401 Design for This Century	3
PGTE 5250 Creativity and Computation Lab	0
Support Electives	6
	15

FIRST YEAR / SPRING

PGTE 5201 Major Studio 2	6
PSAM 5550 Collaboration Studio	3
Academic Elective	3
Support Electives	6
	18

SECOND YEAR / FALL

PGTE 5300 Thesis Studio 1	6
PSAM 5550 Collaboration Studio	3
PGTE 5126 Writing and Research	3
Support Electives	6
	18

SECOND YEAR / SPRING

PGTE 5301 Thesis Studio 2	7
Academic Elective	3
Support Electives	3
	13

TOTAL CREDITS

64

CURRICULUM DESCRIPTION

The MFA in Design and Technology is a two-year, full-time, 64-credit program. Students can take a general curriculum or specialize. While the curriculum is studio based, critical thinking and the study of design process and methods are central to the program. The program's open, flexible structure gives students a great deal of freedom in choosing their areas of research. Students develop conceptual skills, aesthetic awareness, and technical mastery in

individual and collaborative studio projects. They produce a master's thesis in the second year of study, which culminates in an exhibition at the Parsons galleries.

As New School students, program participants can take advantage of the university's resources, enlisting directors or actors from The New School for Drama to work on a digital film, for example, or collaborating with creative writing students. They can take elective courses on subjects like usability, international affairs, sustainability and urban ecology, and psychology.

AREAS OF FOCUS

Through their studio work, students explore cultural sensibilities in the context of technologically mediated experiences. A set of core topics frame these inquiries.

Interactivity: Students explore interactivity in digital and analog settings, including games, websites, smart products, and wearable interfaces.

Narrative: Students explore the narrative possibilities of time-based media, including animation, broadcast design, documentary film, and video.

Computation: Students explore the expressive possibilities of code in animation, performance, narrative, online experiences, and other applications.

MAJOR STUDIOS

Central to the program are the Major Studios, a sequence of classes devoted to the process of conceiving and creating design, in which students develop their own body of work.

Major Studio: Interface This studio introduces students to the process of creating work in a design and technology context. It is where students explore the program's core topics of narrative, computation, and interactivity in relation to design, technology, and society.

Major Studio: Interaction Students design screen-based experiences or new ways to interact with the physical world.

Major Studio: Narrative This course focuses on new narrative possibilities in time-based media, including animation, cinematic space, documentary film and video, broadcast graphics, movie titles, information broadcast, and Internet video.

Major Studio: Computation Students explore the use of digital code-driven systems to create new forms of design.

COLLABORATION STUDIOS

Collaboration Studios are courses in which students work with industry partners, nonprofits, and other organizations on real-world projects. Many are cross-disciplinary, combining design with other areas of study at The New School. Past partners include Curious Pictures, the Open Society, Scholastic, Human Rights Watch, Franklin Furnace, the New Museum, UNICEF, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and the American Symphony Orchestra League. Students work with media ranging from mobile wireless applications, games, digital film, animation, websites, CDs, DVDs, and kiosks to experimental installations.

Recent Collaboration Studios:

Scholastic Learning Lab is sponsored by the Lab for Informal Learning, a research and project development group at Scholastic. Students create a design brief and prototype for one of two concepts aimed at children between six and 12 years old: the Energy Game and Monster Quest. The Energy Game is a multiplayer, Web-delivered strategy game that introduces elementary and middle school students to energy policy and science. Monster Quest is a user-generated-content website for children focused on avatar creation and social networks.

Internet Famous challenges students to spread their work on the Internet, seeking hits and Web media attention. Custom tracking software, currently in development at the Eyebeam Openlab, is released in beta form to students. Sites like Digg, del.icio.us, Alexa, YouTube, and Technorati are mined for data to deliver a single bulk index of Internet fame. Students study successful contagious media projects to learn techniques for spreading their work. Grades are determined algorithmically, on the basis of Web popularity.

Jazz and Animation gives students the opportunity to work with illustrators, communication designers, and musicians to create both live and recorded animation as accompaniment for jazz performances. Students work with a variety of analog and digital technologies, ranging from Max MSP and Jitter to hand-drawn cel animation and lighting and staging effects.

Supernormal Futures Students work with graduate architecture students to envision future scenarios that challenge conventional ideas of what “normal” will be. Extrapolating from existing technologies, students offer critical responses to the present by designing, modeling, and prototyping scenarios of and objects from the future.

ELECTIVES

Academic electives focus on the theories, methodologies, and development processes behind contemporary design and technology. Students can choose from a set of Design and Technology electives and many other courses at Parsons and other divisions of The New School.

Sample departmental electives:

Multi-Channel Interaction Design requires students to develop prototypes for integrated interactive experiences. Employing strategic thinking, research, and concept design, students build and test a piece that works simultaneously in three media environments.

Vision and Sound with Max/MSP/Jitter introduces MIDI communication, interface design, installation and performance strategies, digital sound synthesis, and structure and programming of Quicktime and OpenGL.

Social Fashioning and Emerging Networks examines network communications infrastructures and radical reconceptualizations of public space, focusing on clothing, accessories, and handheld objects as conduits to express identity, agency, and social relation.

Visual Storytelling explores techniques used in creating time-based media (storyboards, animatics and Board-O-Matics, comics) as well as their meaning and structure. Students learn how to articulate story ideas clearly and communicate effectively in a variety of media.

Physical Computing connects the physical and the digital, investigating physicality and interface in relation to the computer and exploring related analog and digital technology.

Geek Graffiti explores graffiti, street art, guerrilla marketing, and technology-based urban projects in collaboration with the Wooster Collective, an arts group in New York.

Narrative and Dynamic Systems looks at the mechanics of storytelling in interactive fiction, exploring connections between technology and narrative experience.

Game Design introduces game analysis, the study of games as formal, social, and cultural systems. Students also explore game production, conducting rapid prototyping and play testing of game concepts.

Please note: Students are advised to refer to the current applicable program catalog for degree completion requirements and to confirm their progress in satisfying those requirements with their advisors.

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