

Doctor of Philosophy in Film and Media Studies

IMPORTANT: The Film and Media Studies Ph.D. program is currently suspended. The department is not accepting applications for the 2025-2026 academic year. Students interested in the Film and Media Studies program may apply for the Master of Arts degree or the Graduate Certificate offered by the department.

The Department of Film and Media Studies unites the inquiry of the academic with the practice and technique of the artist. Scholars and filmmakers work and study together in an environment of mutual encouragement and collegiality.

The affiliation of the Department with the **College of Liberal Arts and Sciences** (<https://college.ku.edu/>) and the **School of the Arts** (<https://sota.ku.edu/>) reflects a liberal arts perspective towards the study of film and media as well as hands-on production elements. We see film and media as ways of ordering, clarifying, and understanding human experience.

We are humanists, sharing the general goal of discovering and putting into communicable form hypotheses about human beings and the world as they interact with it. We are scholars and practitioners, and our work includes the creation of film and media, teaching, and scholarship. As a result we serve our disciplines, the University, and the surrounding community in our capacities as teachers, scholars, and artists.

Discover how film and media can change your life. In KU Film and Media Studies you'll find a community that shares your passion for film and media and is dedicated to helping you succeed in today's changing media landscape. You'll find your place here within the School of the Arts' creative community.

Admission to Graduate Studies

Admission Requirements

- All applicants must meet the requirements outlined in the Admission to Graduate Study (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/admission-to-graduate-study/>) policy.
- Bachelor's degree: A copy of official transcripts showing proof of a bachelor's degree (and any post-bachelor's coursework or degrees) from a regionally accredited institution, or a foreign university with equivalent bachelor's degree requirements is required.
- English proficiency: Proof of English proficiency (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/english-requirements/>) for non-native or non-native-like English speakers is required. There are two bands of English proficiency, including Admission and Full proficiency. For applicants to online programs, Full proficiency is required.

Graduate Admissions

The KU Department of Film and Media Studies is not currently admitting new Ph.D. students or accepting applications to the Ph.D. program.

If admissions resume in the future, the following requirements apply:

Application Materials

Please submit the following materials with your application*:

- An **official transcript**, sent directly to KU, from every previous college or university attended (copies issued to students not accepted).
- Three (3) recent **letters of recommendation**, two of which should be from your current or former teachers.
- A **current resume** of academic and artistic experiences
- A **statement of personal goals** that explains why you want to pursue graduate study.
- A **writing sample** (no more than 15 pages) that demonstrates your ability to theorize, analyze, and synthesize scholarly information.
- Non-native English speakers must demonstrate **proof of English proficiency** before gaining admission to a graduate program. There are specific requirements for students wishing to hold a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) position.

**Please note that application fees will apply.*

The completed application should be submitted **online** (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/>).

Contact Information

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Ph.D. Degree Requirements

Ph.D. in Film and Media Studies Program of Study

Code	Title	Hours
Core Courses		
FMS 800	Introduction to Graduate Study in Film/Media	3
FMS 862	Survey of Film and Media History	3
FMS 865	Film and Media Theory	3
FMS 902	Film Seminar in: _____ (Simultaneously satisfies Research Skills Requirement)	3
Electives:		9
Select 9 hours of Film and Media Electives from list below in consultation with advisor		
FMS 707	Film/Media Internship	
FMS 715	Survey of Japanese Film	
FMS 716	Latin American Cinema	
FMS 718	Anti-war Films	
FMS 722	Soviet and Post-Soviet Russian Cinema	
FMS 743	Contemporary Japanese Film	
FMS 750	Indigenous Film and Media	
FMS 775	Problems in Intermediate Video Production	
FMS 776	Problems in Cinematography	
FMS 777	Post-Production	
FMS 801	Professional Development Seminar	

FMS 811	Development of the American Sound Film	
FMS 813	Development of the International Sound Film	
FMS 814	Development of African-American Images in Film	
FMS 875	Problems in Advanced Video Production	
FMS 880	Development of American Popular Culture in the: _____	
FMS 888	Special Problems in Film History and Criticism	
FMS 998	Investigation and Conference (for Doctoral Students)	
Production		3
Select one of the following:		
FMS 673	Problems in Basic Screenwriting	
FMS 675	Problems in Basic Video Production	
FMS 702	Graduate Seminar in: _____	
FMS 773	Problems in Intermediate Screenwriting	
FMS 895	Intensive Film Project Seminar	
FMS 897	Practicum in Film	
Select 9 hours of secondary field courses in consultation with advisor (Must be in a department other than FMS - Refer to the catalog for courses)		9
RSRS Requirement		6
FMS 902	Film Seminar in: _____	
An additional RSRS course outside of the department, approved by the Director of Graduate Studies, preferably from the student's secondary field		
Total Hours		39

Film and Media Studies Core Requirements

Doctoral students in film and media studies must take a core of courses aimed at strengthening methodological, historical, and theoretical grounding.

Film and Media Studies Elective Requirements

Elective courses focus on the academic study of history, international cinema, popular culture, and digital media, among other areas. These courses are selected with a graduate advisor to reflect the student's research interest.

Film and Media Studies Production Requirements

Production courses give students an understanding of the production process in making film, video, or animation pieces. Upon graduation, doctoral students can perform as competent artisans in addition to research scholars. Production courses are selected with a graduate advisor to reflect the student's specific interest.

Secondary Field Requirements

Secondary field courses at the graduate level from outside the Department of Film and Media Studies are chosen to assist the student in writing the dissertation. They are related to the student's proposed area of research. Examples of departments to draw courses from include, but are not limited to: English; History; Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; American Studies; Education; and Social Welfare.

Additionally, students will select their second Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship course from their secondary field.

Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship (RSRS) Requirements

The University requires that every doctoral student receive training in responsible scholarship pertinent to their field of research and obtain research skills pertinent to the doctoral level of research in their field(s). These requirements must be completed by the end of the semester that the student takes the oral comprehensive exam. These requirements are satisfied by a B grade in FMS 902 and the successful completion of an additional course taken outside the department, preferably from the student's secondary field of interest. This course must be approved in advance by the Director of Graduate Study to count toward the requirement.

Comprehensive Examination

After all coursework is completed, students will complete the comprehensive exam. Two publishable papers are due at the time of the examination. The examination includes written responses to questions in history, theory, and the student's area of research interest, followed by an oral examination. The oral examination is typically completed within three weeks of the written examination, but must be completed within the same semester. The three potential outcomes of the oral examination are Pass with Honors, Pass, and No Pass. Students who have completed the comprehensive exam are required to enroll in accordance with the post-comprehensive enrollment policy (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/doctoral-candidacy/>) beginning the semester following the oral exam. This enrollment includes, but is not limited to, at least 1 dissertation hour every semester until graduation.

Dissertation Prospectus

Following the successful completion of the comprehensive examination, students will submit their dissertation prospectus to their committee. The prospectus should include a bibliography and abstract.

Dissertation

The finished dissertation must constitute a palpable contribution to knowledge in the candidate's chosen field. After its completion, an oral defense must be held no less than 4 weeks before the graduation deadline. During the examination, the student's committee will pose a set of questions about the dissertation. Potential examination outcomes are Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory. Students receiving a Satisfactory mark may be considered for Honors by the department. The exam committee must meet Doctoral Student Oral Exam Committee composition requirements (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/oral-exam-committee-composition/>).

For more information on department policies, including detailed requirements for examinations, please see the Graduate Student Handbook found on our website (<https://film.ku.edu/graduate-degree/>).

Please visit the Graduate Studies Policy Library (<https://policy.ku.edu/office/Graduate-Studies/>) for information regarding additional requirements that may apply.

At the completion of this program, students will be able to:

- use creative inquiry & research.
- use critical writing.
- understand cultural diversity.
- be professional.