HUMAN ECOLOGY: DESIGN STUDIES, MFA

This is the only named option within the Human Ecology, MFA (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/human-ecology-school-wide/human-ecology-mfa/). Students interested in the Human Ecology, MFA should apply directly to this Human Ecology: Design Studies, MFA named option.

The focus of the MFA degree is on creative performance in design. Its goals are to promote strong and creative conceptual thinking, exploration, interpretation, innovation, and overall excellence in design execution.

SPECIALIZATIONS

Students typically focus their work in one of two general areas:

- **Textile and Fashion Design (TFD):** TFD students focus on the conceptual, technical, and aesthetic possibilities of textiles and clothing.
- **Interior Architecture (IA):** IA students typically concentrate on the innovative application of aesthetic, conceptual, and expressive design strategies in interior environments.

There are many students who may work across these areas or have an even more idiosyncratic integrative focus. In every case, students formulate a plan of study to suit their individual needs.

The course of study requires the completion of a minimum of 60 credits and includes a substantial studio work component. The curriculum seeks to create a foundation with flexibility to fit student needs. Interested students can view course requirements on this page. (p. 2)

ADMISSIONS

Please consult the table below for key information about this degree program’s admissions requirements. The program may have more detailed admissions requirements, which can be found below the table or on the program’s website.

Graduate admissions is a two-step process between academic programs and the Graduate School. Applicants must apply online and pay the required application fee to the Graduate School. Applicants must meet all Graduate School requirements and the Graduate School.

Applications are accepted once per year for fall admission and are due by the first Monday in January of the same calendar year for which the student is applying.

Applicants must apply online and pay the required application fee to the Graduate School. Applicants must meet all Graduate School requirements including a bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution and an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or higher (on a 4.0 scale).

REQUIRED ADMISSION MATERIALS

- Online application (https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/) indicating “Human Ecology MFA–Design Studies” as your program selection
- $75 application fee
- CV/resume
- Unofficial transcripts or academic records from each institution attended (official transcripts will be required for students who receive an admission offer)
- Official TOEFL or Melab score (International students only)
- Three letters of recommendation (submitted electronically through your Graduate School application)
- Uploaded Statement of Purpose/Reasons for Graduate Study

Submit to the School of Human Ecology:

- Portfolio
  - All MFA applicants must submit a digital portfolio for review. The portfolio should contain no more than 20 images/pages and there is a 5 MB file size limit for each image or page. Applicants will be able to upload portfolios to the University of Wisconsin's Box cloud storage system. Digital folders will be created for applicants within 48–72 hours after their electronic application has been received by UW–Madison's Graduate School. Please contact the SoHE Graduate Program Coordinator for more information.

Additional information is available here (http://sohe.wisc.edu/mfa/).

FUNDING

GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid. Further funding information (https://grad.wisc.edu/funding/) is available from the Graduate School. Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and restrictions related to funding.

PROGRAM RESOURCES

Funding opportunities for Human Ecology graduate students are available and made possible, in large part, by generous donations to SoHE. Every year, these funds are used to fund teaching or project assistantships, award academic excellence scholarships, and provide students doing their masters or doctoral research or final MFA project with conference travel scholarships and graduate research scholarships. See the School of Human Ecology Enrollment Policy on Funding Eligibility (https://
sohe.wisc.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-forms-deadlines/full-time-enrollment-policy-for-funding-eligibility/) and view current funding opportunities on our program website (https://sohe.wisc.edu/graduate-students/funding/) for more information.

**REQUIREMENTS**

**MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS**

Review the Graduate School minimum academic progress and degree requirements (http://guide.wisc.edu/#policiesandrequirementstext), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

**NAMED OPTION REQUIREMENTS**

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<tr>
<th>MODE OF INSTRUCTION</th>
<th>Face to Face</th>
<th>Evening/Weekend</th>
<th>Online</th>
<th>Hybrid</th>
<th>Accelerated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mode of Instruction Definitions**

**Accelerated:** Accelerated programs are offered at a fast pace that condenses the time to completion. Students typically take enough credits aimed at completing the program in a year or two.

**Evening/Weekend:** Courses meet on the UW–Madison campus only in evenings and/or on weekends to accommodate typical business schedules. Students have the advantages of face-to-face courses with the flexibility to keep work and other life commitments.

**Face-to-Face:** Courses typically meet during weekdays on the UW-Madison Campus.

**Hybrid:** These programs combine face-to-face and online learning formats. Contact the program for more specific information.

**Online:** These programs are offered 100% online. Some programs may require an on-campus orientation or residency experience, but the courses will be facilitated in an online format.

**CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement Detail</th>
<th>Minimum Credit Requirement</th>
<th>Minimum Residence Credit Requirement</th>
<th>Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement</th>
<th>Overall Graduate GPA Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>60 credits</td>
<td>24 credits</td>
<td>Half of degree coursework (30 credits out of 60 total credits) must be completed graduate-level coursework; courses with the Graduate Level Coursework attribute are identified and searchable in the university’s Course Guide.</td>
<td>3.00 GPA required.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other Grade Requirements**

The Graduate School requires an average grade of B or better in all coursework (300 or above, not including research credits) taken as a graduate student unless conditions for probationary status require higher grades. Grades of Incomplete are considered to be unsatisfactory if they are not removed during the next enrolled semester.

**Assessments and Examinations**

Before beginning substantial work on their thesis, all MFA students must receive approval of their thesis proposal from their MFA committee after satisfactorily completing at least three full-time semesters of coursework and passing the MFA Interim Qualifier. The thesis proposal is intended to describe the creative work or project that will be at the core of the thesis, to demonstrate the student’s broad knowledge in areas that relate to their thesis, to explain how their work or project relates to the work of other designers and artists, to demonstrate their awareness of relevant theories and methods as reflected in their literature review, to explain their methods and materials, and to outline a detailed schedule for the completion of the thesis.

Upon approval of their thesis proposal, students are expected to register for 9 credits that will represent thesis writing and production. These credits are generally research and thesis credits, independent studies, or required seminars; they must be at the 500 level or above.

All MFA students are required to present their work at least once per academic year in a Group Review Session attended by faculty and the other MFA students. First year students can present their work that they submitted for their application, or work from a course that they have taken. Second year students should present work from their Focus Area student work, or their advanced General Studio work. Third-year students should present their thesis work in progress.

The Group Review Sessions have several goals.

* Enable MFA students to see what other MFA students are working on.
* Enable the MFA faculty as a whole to see what all of the MFA students are working on.
* Enable MFA students to receive constructive review of their work.
* Enable MFA students to gain experience critiquing and receiving critique.
* Enable MFA students to gain experience presenting their work.

All MFA students are required to successfully prepare and present a thesis that includes a studio component, a written component, and an oral defense. These are Research and Thesis credits with the student’s advisor.

**Language Requirements**

Contact the program for information on any language requirements.

**Doctoral Minor/Breadth Requirements**

All doctoral students are required to complete a minor.
# REQUIRED COURSES

## Pre-MFA Preparation Courses

Pre-MFA preparation courses vary by area of study and may include, but are not limited to, the following courses:

- **Textile and Fashion Design**
- **Textile and/or Fashion History**

### Interior Architecture

- **DS 241** Visual Communication I
- **DS 451** Color Theory and Technology
- **DS 222** Interior Design I
- **DS 322** Interior Design II

## Core Courses

As much as possible within their first two years, all MFA students will be expected to enroll in 18-21 credits distributed among the following Core Courses:

### INTER-HE 801 Special Topics in Human Ecology

(Select topic: Theories and Perspectives in Human Ecology)

### Methods and Theory in Design and Culture

- **DS/ANTHRO/ART HIST/HISTORY/LAND ARC 764** Dimensions of Material Culture

Choose at least one additional course. Suggestions include:

- **DS 642** Taste (Recommended)
- **ART 700** Introduction to Graduate Studies in Art
- **ART HIST 703** Curatorial Studies Colloquium

### Seminar Courses

- **DS 920** Seminar in Design Studies

At least one additional seminar course

### History and Criticism

- **ART 508** Colloquium in Art

Choose from among the following courses:

- **Any Art History or Design Studies course focusing on history, 500 level or above**
- **ART HIST/AFROAMER 801** Historiography, Theory and Methods in Visual Culture
- **ART HIST/AFROAMER 802** Visual Cultures: Topics in Visual Cultures

### Non-Studio Academic Coursework-Graduate Student Instructor Course

Choose from:

- **ART 409** Digital Fabrication Studio
- **ART 511** Art Performance
- **ART 521** Installations and Environments
- **ART 570** Advanced Topics in 4D Art

### Required Courses (Interior Architecture concentration only.)

- **May be waived for students with substantial portfolios.**

- **DS 623** Interior Design IV
- **DS 626** Interior Design V

Recommended courses include:

- **ART 409** Digital Fabrication Studio
- **ART 511** Art Performance
- **ART 521** Installations and Environments
- **ART 570** Advanced Topics in 4D Art

**ART 660**

**HISTORY 301** History at Work: History Internship Seminar

Other courses at the 500 level or above in Art or Landscape Architecture

### Focus Area Studio Work

15

### Interim MFA Qualifier

3

### Preparation of Final Thesis

9

### Final Thesis

6

**Total Credits**

60

1

Particularly in the Interior Architecture track, students may have graduated from an undergraduate program that did not comprehensively prepare them for the level of studio work in the MFA program. However, promising applicants who do not have sufficient educational background may be admitted, under the condition that he or she take pre-MFA preparation courses; if the student satisfactorily completes a pre-MFA series of courses with a 3.3 GPA or above, the student may subsequently advance to full MFA student status. Students will work closely with their major faculty advisor to determine appropriate pre-MFA preparation courses.

2

The MFA Core Course curriculum offers an opportunity for all Design Studies students to establish a body of knowledge in theories, creative practices, and seminars relevant to studio based inquiry.

The core curriculum also includes specialized training in instruction and pedagogy; this is requisite for graduate teaching assistant duties (often a source of MFA student funding), and useful for students who wish to pursue academic careers. A student who is assigned to a teaching assistantship at the time of admission may take the course(s) during their first semester while fulfilling teaching assistant duties.

3

Choose from: delta.wisc.edu/Courses_and_Programs/courses_and_programs_overview.html (http://www.delta.wisc.edu/Courses_and_Programs/courses_and_programs_overview.html)

4

The general studio work provides students with an overview of studio practices that will be the foundation for their Focus Area Studio work, the Qualifier and the Thesis. Students are encouraged to take courses that are offered both inside and outside the Design Studies Department to develop an interdisciplinary framework for their MFA work.

The core curriculum also includes an independent study that will facilitate the production of the Interim MFA Qualifier.

MFA students are expected to develop a strong foundation in studio-based inquiry. Students in the Interior Architecture track are strongly encouraged to take both DS 623 Interior Design IV and DS 626 Interior Design V, with the addition of project components tailored to each student’s Focus Area. All students are encouraged to take DS 570 Design and Fashion Event Management.

5

All MFA students, in consultation with their advisor, define a focus area that will help prepare them for their Interim MFA Qualifier and Thesis Proposal. This focus builds on their General Studio Work. Students often do studio work in their focus area as independent studies (DS 699 Independent Study) with appropriate faculty members.
The Interim MFA Qualifier (Qualifier) is part of the Core Course requirements for every MFA student, and must be successfully completed prior to receiving final approval of the thesis proposal. The Qualifier provides students with an opportunity to create and present a studio-based project in their area of specialization in preparation for their final thesis. While limited in scope, the project should be comparable to the final thesis in terms of its creative and intellectual tone and quality. The project could be an exhibition that includes some elements that are integrated into a final thesis exhibition (most common for students in the Textile and Fashion Design track), or it could be a presentation and formal dissemination of a pilot design project that serves as a case study for the final thesis (most common for students in the Interior Architecture track). Students are encouraged to disseminate the project broadly, seeking out visibly prominent public venues, incorporating online versions, or presenting at conferences or in design competitions.

The Interim MFA Qualifier may be based on work completed as part of any UW graduate studio course, as well as from independent studies. Students typically enroll in an independent study (DS 699 Independent Study) with their major advisor to complete the Qualifier. The Qualifier must be reviewed and approved by the student’s major advisor, in consultation with the student’s thesis committee. The project must receive a passing grade in order for the student to receive final approval of their thesis proposal.

Policies

Graduate School Policies

The Graduate School’s Academic Policies and Procedures (https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/) provide essential information regarding general university policies. Program authority to set degree policies beyond the minimum required by the Graduate School lies with the degree program faculty. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.

Named Option-Specific Policies

Prior Coursework

Graduate Work from Other Institutions

With program approval, students are allowed to count up to 20 credits of graduate coursework taken at other institutions or as a UW–Madison Special student (with a maximum of 9 special student credits as part of the 20). Prior coursework taken at other institutions may not be used to satisfy the minimum graduate residence credit requirement. Credits earned five or more years prior to admission to an MFA degree are not allowed to satisfy requirements. Use of Special student credit may require payment of tuition difference.

UW–Madison Undergraduate

With program approval, up to 7 credits numbered 300 or above from a UW–Madison undergraduate degree are allowed to count toward degree credit; undergraduate courses must be numbered 700 or above to count toward the minimum graduate coursework requirement. No undergraduate coursework may count toward graduate residence requirement.

UW–Madison University Special

With program approval, students are allowed to count up to 20 credits of graduate coursework taken at other institutions or as a UW–Madison Special student (with a maximum of 9 special student credits as part of the 20). Special student coursework must be numbered 300 or above for residence and degree credit and 700 or above for minimum graduate coursework (50%) credit.

Credits Earned Five or More Years Prior to Admission to an MFA degree are not allowed to satisfy requirements. Use of Special student credit may require payment of tuition difference.

Probation

The Graduate School regularly reviews the record of any student who earned grades of BC, C, D, F, or Incomplete in a graduate course (300 or above), or grade of U in research credits. This review could result in academic probation with a hold on future enrollment or in being suspended from the Graduate School.

Advisor / Committee

Every graduate student is required to have an advisor. An advisor is a faculty member, or sometimes a committee, from the major department responsible for providing advice regarding graduate studies. An advisor generally serves as the thesis advisor. In many cases, an advisor is assigned to incoming students. Students can be suspended from the Graduate School if they do not have an advisor.

To ensure that students are making satisfactory progress toward a degree, the Graduate School expects them to meet with their advisor on a regular basis.

A committee often accomplishes advising for the students in the early stages of their studies.

Credits Per Term Allowed

12 credits

Time Constraints

Master’s degree students who have been absent for five or more consecutive years lose all credits that they have earned before their absence. Individual programs may count the coursework students completed prior to their absence for meeting program requirements; that coursework may not count toward Graduate School credit requirements.

Grievances and Appeals

These resources may be helpful in addressing your concerns:

- Bias or Hate Reporting (https://doso.students.wisc.edu/bias-or-hate-reporting/)
- Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures (https://hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp/#grievance-procedure)
- Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Policies and Procedures (https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/)
  - Office of the Provost for Faculty and Staff Affairs (https://facstaff.provost.wisc.edu/)
- Dean of Students Office (https://doso.students.wisc.edu/)(for all students to seek grievance assistance and support)
- Employee Assistance (http://www.eao.wisc.edu/) (for personal counseling and workplace consultation around communication and conflict involving graduate assistants and other employees, post-doctoral students, faculty and staff)
- Employee Disability Resource Office (https://employeedisabilities.wisc.edu/) (for qualified employees or applicants with disabilities to have equal employment opportunities)
• Graduate School (https://grad.wisc.edu/) (for informal advice at any level of review and for official appeals of program/departmental or school/college grievance decisions)
• Office of Compliance (https://compliance.wisc.edu/) (for class harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment and sex violence)
• Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/) (for conflicts involving students)
• Ombuds Office for Faculty and Staff (http://www.ombuds.wisc.edu/) (for employed graduate students and post-docs, as well as faculty and staff)
• Title IX (https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/) (for concerns about discrimination)

Any student who feels that he or she has been treated unfairly by a Human Ecology faculty or staff member has the right to complain about the treatment and to receive a prompt hearing of the grievance, following the grievance procedures outlined below. To ensure a prompt and fair hearing of any complaint, and to protect both the rights of the student and the person at whom the complaint is addressed, the procedures below are used in the School of Human Ecology.

The person whom the complaint is directed against must be an employee of the School of Human Ecology. Any graduate student or graduate applicant may use these procedures unless the complaint is covered by other campus rules or contracts.

Note: These procedures do not cover appeals of admissions decisions or other decisions made by departmental or Human Ecology committees. For information on appeals of decisions, students should contact the chair of the committee or the chair of the department that made the decision.

Contacts

Civil Society and Community Studies: Brian McInnes (https://sohe.wisc.edu/staff/brian-mcinnes/) (Graduate Program Chair), Cynthia Jasper (http://sohe.wisc.edu/staff/cynthia-jasper/) (Department Chair)

Consumer Science: J. Michael Collins (https://sohe.wisc.edu/staff/j-michael-collins/) (Graduate Program Chair), Nancy Wong (http://sohe.wisc.edu/staff/nancy-wong/) (Department Chair)

Design Studies: Jung-hye Shin (https://sohe.wisc.edu/staff/jung-hye-shin/) (Graduate Program Chair), Roberto Rengel (http://sohe.wisc.edu/staff/roberto-rengel/) (Department Chair)

Human Development and Family Studies: Kristin Litzelman (https://sohe.wisc.edu/staff/kristin-litzelman/) (Graduate Program Chair), Janean Dilworth-Bart (https://sohe.wisc.edu/staff/janean-dilworth-bart-2/) (Department Chair)

Master of Science in Human Ecology: Sarah Halpem-Meekin (https://sohe.wisc.edu/staff/sarah-halpem-meekin/) (Graduate Program Chair)

Students are encouraged to keep written documentation of their experience of unfair treatment both before and during the grievance proceedings.

Graduate Student Grievance Procedures

STEP 1. The student should first consider talking directly with the person(s) against whom the grievance is directed. Some issues can be settled at this level, and some cannot be. Although students are encouraged to talk directly with the person(s) involved, we recognize that this may not always be possible. If the complaint cannot be resolved satisfactorily by talking with the person(s) involved, the student may continue to Step 2.

NOTE: In cases of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, or racial discrimination, students may choose to bypass these procedures and report the conduct directly to either of the following offices:

• SoHE Human Resources Manager: Nancy Andrews (https://sohe.wisc.edu/staff/nancy-andrews/)
• The Office for Equity and Diversity (http://oed.wisc.edu/) (179-A Bascom Hall, 608-263-2378, Wisconsin Telecommunications Relay Service: 7-1-1)

STEP 2. Does the complaint involve someone in a Human Ecology academic department (Civil Society and Community Studies, Consumer Science, Design Studies, and Human Development & Family Studies)?

• Yes: The student should contact the chair of the department. The student will submit the grievance to the chair in writing. This must be done within 60 calendar days of the alleged unfair treatment. The department chair will refer the matter to the department’s Graduate Program Council or to another appropriate departmental committee (standing or ad hoc) for review. The committee will share the student’s written complaint with the person at whom the complaint is directed, and will obtain a written response from this person. This response will be shared with the student filing the grievance. The committee chair will provide a timely written decision to the student on the action taken by the committee (the departmental decision). If either party is unwilling to accept the departmental decision, the department chair will refer the matter to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies (see contact information below). The Associate Dean will bring the grievance to the Human Ecology Graduate Program Council for review. (NOTE: if the grievance is against the department chair, the written complaint should be referred to the chair of the department’s graduate program committee; contact information given below.)

• No: The student should contact the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. (https://sohe.wisc.edu/staff/connie-flanagan/) The student will submit the grievance to the Associate Dean in writing. This must be done within 60 calendar days of the alleged unfair treatment. The Associate Dean will refer the grievance to the Human Ecology Graduate Program Council for review.

STEP 3. Human Ecology Graduate Program Council review.

To ensure fairness, the Graduate Program Council chair may appoint a subcommittee to review the complaint (e.g., excluding faculty from the student’s department). The Graduate Program Council may ask for additional information from the parties involved and may hold a hearing at which both parties will be asked to speak separately in closed session. The Graduate Program Council will then make a written recommendation to the Associate Dean who will render a decision and submit it to the Dean of the School for final approval. The Associate Dean will provide the Dean’s final decision in writing to the student and to the person against whom the grievance was filed. Unless a longer time is mutually agreed upon by the individuals involved, this written decision shall be made within 30 working days from the date when the written grievance was filed with the Associate Dean’s Office.
Students not willing to accept the final decision of the Dean may appeal to the Graduate School (https://grad.wisc.edu/documents/grievances-and-appeals/).

Questions about these procedures can be directed to Connie Flanagan, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies (https://sohe.wisc.edu/staff/connie-flanagan/).

State law contains provisions regarding discrimination and harassment. Wisconsin Statutes 36.12 reads, in part: “No student may be denied admission to, participation in or the benefits of, or be discriminated against in any service, program, course or facility of the system or its institutions or centers because of the student’s race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, disability, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status or parental status.”

In addition, the UW-System prohibits discrimination based on gender identity or gender expression.

Students have the right to file discrimination and harassment complaints with the Office for Equity and Diversity (https://employeedisabilities.wisc.edu/), 179-A Bascom Hall, 263-2378, Wisconsin Telecommunications Relay Service: 7-1-1

OTHER
n/a

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Take advantage of the Graduate School’s professional development resources (https://grad.wisc.edu/pd/) to build skills, thrive academically, and launch your career.

PROGRAM RESOURCES

The School of Human Ecology Graduate Program values the professional development of graduate students and provides financial awards to those who are invited to present at professional conferences/exhibits. The purpose of the support is to encourage participation in professional development, scholarly research, and/or creative endeavor and to help cover expenses not covered by other sources. Students may receive a maximum award of $650 for travel ($750 for international travel) to support conference participation in a single academic year. Students are encouraged to seek conference and travel funding from the Graduate School as a first step and apply for supplemental funds through SoHE as needed.

In addition, each academic department within the School of Human Ecology may offer additional professional development grant opportunities. See the program Events Calendar (https://sohe.wisc.edu/calendar-of-events/) for the most up-to-date information on professional development opportunities.

PEOPLE

Human Ecology Directory (https://humanecology.wisc.edu/staff/): listing of all faculty, staff, and graduate students; searchable by association, department, and name