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

GRADUATE SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

Graduate admissions is a two-step process between academic degree programs and the Graduate School. Applicants must meet requirements of both the program(s) and the Graduate School. Once you have researched the graduate program(s) you are interested in, apply online (https://grad.wisc.edu/admissions).

Letters of Recommendation Required

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 Eric MacKay, emackay2@wisc.edu, 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 processes 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/graduate/#policiesandrequirementstext), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

**NAMED OPTION REQUIREMENTS**

**MODE OF INSTRUCTION**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode to Face</th>
<th>Evening/Weekend</th>
<th>Online</th>
<th>Hybrid</th>
<th>Accelerated</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face to Face</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evening/Weekend</td>
<td>These programs are offered in an evening and/or weekend format to accommodate working schedules. Enjoy the advantages of on-campus courses and personal connections, while keeping your day job. For more information about the meeting schedule of a specific program, contact the program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>These programs are offered primarily online. Many available online programs can be completed almost entirely online with all online programs offering at least 50 percent or more of the program work online. Some online programs have an on-campus component that is often designed to accommodate working schedules. Take advantage of the convenience of online learning while participating in a rich, interactive learning environment. For more information about the online nature of a specific program, contact the program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>These programs have innovative curricula that combine on-campus and online formats. Most hybrid programs are completed on-campus with a partial or completely online semester. For more information about the hybrid schedule of a specific program, contact the program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accelerated</td>
<td>These on-campus programs are offered in an accelerated format that allows you to complete your program in a condensed time-frame. Enjoy the advantages of on-campus courses with minimal disruption to your career. For more information about the accelerated nature of a specific program, contact the program.</td>
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**CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS**

**Requirements Detail**

- **Minimum Credit Requirement**: 60 credits
- **Minimum Residence Credit Requirement**: 24 credits
- **Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement**: 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. Overall Graduate GPA Requirement: 3.00 GPA required.

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 their 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 792 Theories and Perspectives in Human Ecology (Enroll for 1 credit only)
- **ART 508 History and Criticism**
- **ART 511 Art Performance**
- **ART 521 Installations and Environments**
- **ART 570 Advanced Topics in 4D Art**

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

**Focus Area Studio Work**

- Choose from: delta.wisc.edu/Courses_and_Programs/courses_and_programs_overview.html

**Final Thesis**

- Final Thesis Preparation of Final Thesis
- Interim MFA Qualifier

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

**Focus Area Studio Work**

- **ART 660 Art and Technology**
- **HISTORY 301 History at Work: History Internship Seminar**

Students often do studio work in their focus area as independent 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.

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.

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.

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.

### GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES

The Graduate School’s Academic Policies and Procedures ([https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy](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

#### GRADUATE PROGRAM HANDBOOK


### 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.

**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

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<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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### 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.

### OTHER

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<td>12 credits</td>
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### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

#### GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Take advantage of the Graduate School’s professional development resources ([https://grad.wisc.edu/pd](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.

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**

Faculty:

**CIVIL SOCIETY AND COMMUNITY STUDIES**
*Professors*: Cynthia Jasper (chair), Lori Bakken, Constance Flanagan

*Assistant Professors*: Kendra Alexander, Kasey Keeler, Jennifer Gaddis, Leah Horowitz, Carolina Sarmiento, Shannon Sparks

**CONSUMER SCIENCE (CONSUMER BEHAVIOR & FAMILY ECONOMICS)**
*Professors*: Nancy Wong (chair), Judith Bartfeld

*Associate Professors*: J. Michael Collins, Clifford Robb

*Assistant Professors*: Feneba Addo, Lydia Ashton

**DESIGN STUDIES**
*Professors*: Roberto Rengel (chair), Jennifer Angus, Wei Dong, Majid Sarmadi, Mark Nelson

*Associate Professors*: Mary Hark, Carolyn Kallenborn, Marina Moskowitz, Kevin Ponto, Jung-hye Shin

*Assistant Professors*: Marianne Fairbanks, Kristin Thorleifsdottir

**HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY STUDIES**
*Professors*: Janean Dilworth-Bart (chair), Charles Raison, Julie Poehlmann-Tynan

*Associate Professors*: Larissa Duncan, Sarah Halpern-Meekin, Sigan Hartley, Heather Kirkorian, Robert Nix, Lauren Papp

*Assistant Professors*: Kristin Litzelman, Margaret Kerr