

Information Design and Visualization, MFA

The Master of Fine Arts in Information Design and Visualization focuses on the analytical and visual communication of information. Successful graduates are experts in the visual languages of data who produce effective and meaningful visual displays of abstract information. They collaborate with other professionals, researchers, or clients in a variety of fields and settings.

Students have an opportunity to gain an understanding of the principles of translating data and information into visual, material, and dynamic forms and to learn to integrate theoretical, visual, and technical aspects of structuring and representing data to provide a broad range of audiences increased access to socially relevant issues. The curriculum is built upon an established undergraduate program in graphic, information, and interaction design and seeks applicants from diverse fields of study—not just visual communications—who are interested in information visualization and communication of information through visual and analytical means. Practicing professionals and recent undergraduates in a variety of fields (architecture, graphic design, journalism, communications, business, the humanities, and sciences) who desire a fluency in information design should apply.

Graduates are prepared to work effectively in a dynamic and burgeoning field of practice and research in environments including design firms, research centers, corporations, academic institutions, and government and urban agencies. The program seeks to produce professionals skilled in design principles and practices needed to assume leadership roles in an evolving interdisciplinary field. Students will also be well positioned to pursue PhDs and academic careers.

Fall semester 1 is dedicated to foundations, including an introductory course in information visualization and visual communication, a seminar on the history of visualization, a studio course, and an introduction to programming with d3. Students with strong prior experience in programming can replace the latter course with an elective.

Spring semester 2 is dedicated to the exploration of diverse research topics. In Studio 2 you will create an interactive visualization project; in information design theory, you will obtain theoretical background in design theory and concept mapping; the research methods class will prepare you for the thesis process by introducing you to different research methods; and an open elective will allow you to pick a research theme you are interested in.

Fall semester 3 is dedicated to developing your thesis in theory and practice. All courses in this semester are dedicated to this goal, including the research seminar and the Studio 3 course. Two electives allow you to add competencies related to your thesis topic.

Fall semester 4 is finally all about finalizing the thesis and the thesis exhibition.

Program Requirements

Complete all courses and requirements listed below unless otherwise indicated.

Core Requirements

Code	Title	Hours
ARTG 5100	Information Design Studio 1: Principles	4

ARTG 6100	Information Design Studio 2: Dynamic Mapping and Models	4
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ARTG 6200	Information Design Studio 3: Synthesis	4
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Theory and Research Methods

ARTG 5120	Research Methods for Design	4
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ARTG 5330	Visualization Technologies 1	4
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ARTG 6110	Information Design Theory and Critical Thinking	4
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Typography and History

ARTG 5110	Information Design History	4
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ARTG 5130	Visual Communication for Information Design	4
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Thesis

ARTG 7100	Thesis Seminar for Design	4
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ARTG 7990	Thesis	8
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Electives

Code	Title	Hours
In consultation with faculty advisor, complete four courses from the following:		16

ARTG 5310	Visual Cognition	
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ARTG 5320	Statistics Basics for Designers	
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ARTG 6310	Design for Behavior and Experience	
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ARTG 6320	Design of Information-Rich Environments	
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ARTG 6330	Information Design Mapping Strategies	
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ARTG 6900	Special Topics in Design	
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DA 5020	Collecting, Storing, and Retrieving Data	
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DA 5030	Introduction to Data Mining/Machine Learning	
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PPUA 5301	Introduction to Computational Statistics	
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Program Credit/GPA Requirements

60 total semester hours required
 Minimum 3.000 GPA required

Plan of Study

Sample Two Years, One Optional Co-op Plan of Study

Year 1					
Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours	Summer Full Semester	Hours
ARTG 5100	4	ARTG 5120	4	ARTE 6964	
ARTG 5110	4	ARTG 6100	4		
ARTG 5130	4	ARTG 6110	4		
ARTG 5330	4	Open elective	4		
		16			0

Year 2					
Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours		
ARTG 6200	4	ARTG 7990	8		
ARTG 7100	4	ARTG 7991	4		

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Open elective	4 Open elective	4
Open elective	4	
	16	16

Total Hours: 64

Sample Two Years, No Co-op Plan of Study

Year 1

Fall	Hours Spring	Hours Summer Full Semester	Hours
ARTG 5100	4 ARTG 5120	4 Vacation	0
ARTG 5110	4 ARTG 6100	4	
ARTG 5130	4 ARTG 6110	4	
ARTG 5330	4 Open elective	4	
	16	16	0

Year 2

Fall	Hours Spring	Hours
ARTG 6200	4 ARTG 7990	8
ARTG 7100	4 ARTG 7991	
Open elective	4 Open elective	4
Open elective	4	
	16	12

Total Hours: 60