This handbook applies only to the 2009 Cohort whose MFA studies begin in Academic Year 2009-2010. The effective date of this Handbook is August 15, 2009
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Introduction

You are now part of the premiere graduate degree program in science and natural history filmmaking. We believe you will find the program to be exciting, insightful, and challenging. The School of Film and Photography (SFP) faculty and staff along with the students in the cohorts preceding yours will guide you in understanding the program’s structure and procedures. Our goal is to help you develop your filmmaking knowledge and skills through the many opportunities offered you in the program.

This MFA Handbook contains the guidelines that will determine the requirements for the curriculum leading to your Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Science and natural History Filmmaking (SNHF) degree. The Handbook will also inform you about the overall philosophy of the program as well as the procedural requirements for registration, equipment use, your comprehensive examinations, and your thesis work. Over the course of three years, there may very well be changes and adjustments to the curriculum, School, College of Arts and Architecture (CAA), Division of Graduate Education (DGE), and University procedures, so please be attentive to emails, website postings, and class announcements. The handbook is a School publication and subject to the respective rules of the SFP, the College (the CA), the DGE, and Montana State University-Bozeman (MSU-Bozeman). Once you have adjusted to the general processes on campus and have worked through the acronyms, you may consult the following websites for current information:

MSU news, rules and procedures: http://www.montana.edu/
DGE news and requirements: http://www.montana.edu/gradstudies.
CAA information: http://www.montana.edu/wwwdt/
SFP Information: http://mta.montana.edu/
SNHF MFA: http://naturefilm.montana.edu/index.php

As a formal academic discipline, SNHF is entering its ninth year. Compared to more traditional disciplines such as mathematics or philosophy, which have thousands of years of tradition and instruction behind them, SNHF is an infant. As a result, the curriculum of the MFA program has undergone several revisions during its short life. Your curriculum was instituted in the 2008-2009 academic year and reflects...
months of discussion and work by faculty, SNHF graduates, and the students at the time to create a course of study that both grounded the students in core filmmaking principles, provided training in the skills needed for a successful career in either production or academia or both. Student sin cohorts who began their studies earlier than 2008 will be following earlier curricula. We believe the 2008 curriculum represents significant improvements over its predecessors, but curricula, like filmmakers, can always be better. Changes in the future are inevitable, but we do believe this curriculum will provide the breadth of knowledge and specific instruction in craft skills that will benefit you during both your academic career and the many years afterwards when you are a professional filmmaker.
The Goals of the Program

The Program Mission Statement

The following mission statement summarizes the overall goals of the MFA program: “The mission of the MFA in Filmmaking with an Emphasis in Science and Natural History Production is to train aspiring filmmakers with an interest and background in scientific disciplines to develop the creative, technical, and critical skills needed to create work that will contribute to the public understanding of science.”

Please note that this statement includes the proposed new name for the degree, which has yet to be approved by the Montana Board of Regents. Your degree will be an MFA in Science and Natural History Filmmaking, but the proposed change indicates the new orientation of the program. To work successfully in the profession, you must be filmmakers first and then specialists in science and natural history production. There is a vocabulary, skill set, and knowledge base common to all filmmakers, whether they make multimillion-dollar studio features, low-budget independent films, or episodic television for Animal Planet. You need to share that background even as you pursue your own respective specialties. It is similar to medical training: all physicians first acquire knowledge of the human body and how it functions. They then go on to become neurosurgeons, internists, oncologists, or other specialists.

The mission statement also conveys the Program’s emphasis on finding creative ways of expressing scientific information primarily through nonfiction filmmaking. Much scientific research is based on innovation, but scientific media often settles for conventional, formulaic structures. The MSU program seeks to graduate filmmakers who will not settle for the traditional models. They will receive some training in them, since you need to know about the past and current formats in order to change them, but the intention is to take those models to more creatively and scientifically profound levels.

The Filmmaking Life

Many of your predecessors in the program have been surprised by both the difficulty of filmmaking and the incredibly challenging professional life that
awaits them. Filmmaking is incredibly time consuming because it is an art of exruciating details. Even the shortest films require hundreds of decisions and many hours of work. It is not glamorous work, either, despite the many festivals, awards, and “infotainment” programs that promise fame and fortune. A graduate of this program can expect to take up to ten years to become established in the field (although almost all our MFA graduates find employment shortly after or even before graduation). Salaries are low at the beginning of your career. Those of you transitioning into filmmaking from other jobs or professions need to prepare for a period of time in which your primary reward in your respective job will be experience and resume credits rather than money. As in many other fields, you have to prove to others that you are as good as you think (or know) you are.

You may also experience periods of unemployment, under-employment or job frustration. This is all part of the shared filmmaking experience in the profession. Especially in a time of major technological change, there is no set career path. There is only a trail that each of you will hack out according to your interests and abilities. Filmmaking is an art, a craft, and a business. Often the alliance of the three is not only uneasy but also unholy. Filmmaking is also about problem solving under pressure. To individuals coming from disciplines with more predictable situations, filmmaking may seem chaotic or disorganized. It is not. The field follows its own rhythms and processes. Several years ago, the new cohort at the time adopted “Embrace the chaos” as its guiding phrase to demonstrate its acceptance of this unpredictable characteristic of filmmaking. Like a skilled surfer, you need to ride the wave rather than fight it.

The MFA degree is your starting point; it will provide a solid foundation for your future career. It will often get you in the door of a production company, a respected agency or organization (e.g., NASA or National Geographic), or a university. Your professional progress will be determined by your talent and persistence as well as by the quality of your work. Established filmmakers often use the term “passion” when describing the most important requirement for a filmmaker. You have to desire the work and the career. With diligent effort and intelligent planning, you can make a good living, but your ultimate reward will be your films and their impact.

In recent years, a number of our students have chosen to pursue college-level academic careers. Your MFA is a terminal degree, which means it qualifies as a credential for a college or university tenure-track position at many institutions. One reason for our increased emphasis on science and natural history production within a broader context of general filmmaking is to expand the professional career opportunities for our graduates.
Program Costs

The SFP is well aware of the expense you will incur over the course of the three years of the program. For a variety of administrative reasons, the Program is tuition-driven, which means it receives only a small amount of direct support from the University. The School administration is working to increase the number of teaching assistantships, scholarships, and other sources of financial aid available to students. There are also opportunities to earn some funds working in Department administrative areas (e.g., Checkout), and on productions both within and outside the School. It is recommended that during your first year you keep your work commitments to a minimum. Your academic workload will be significant, and we have found that students often cannot manage demanding jobs and course work. After the first year, students are usually better able to balance employment and graduate academic responsibilities. By deciding to enroll in the Program, you have decided to spend the money to pursue a degree in a unique and rewarding profession. Be financially prudent, but accept your decision and work to enjoy the full value of your investment.

What You Are Buying

While many academic programs have unfortunately adapted a consumer view of tuition (“You pay your money, you get the product you want”), that is not true of the MFA in Science and Natural History Filmmaking. Your tuition buys you many things: access to experienced faculty and up-to-date facilities, training in a desirable and continually challenging profession, opportunities for self-expression and self-improvement, and collegial relationships that will last throughout your career. The Program is responsible for providing the education we know is relevant and important. Whatever your previous media has been, none of you is a filmmaker yet. The School would be derelict in its responsibilities if it did not insist on the academic discipline and curricula it believes are necessary for you to develop as filmmakers. Because you pay tuition does not mean you can demand to only take the instruction you think is important. Questioning is encouraged and leads to progress; constant complaining suggests a lack of maturity and initiative. Everyone in the School from the undergraduate students through the School director is ready to help you with any problems – academic, financial, or professional. The School does, however, have both the right and the obligation to offer the instruction during the course of three years it believes will best prepare you for your future career.
Problems and Protocols

During your time in the SNHF Program, problems will inevitably arise. There are specific protocols to be followed if you need to discuss specific courses, problems with university personnel (including instructors), administrative issues, general program policy, or financial concerns. Do not immediately go to the top of the administrator in the School (the director), the College (the Dean) or the University (the president). By bypassing the instructors or administrators most immediately involved in your education you will not only exacerbate what may be a difficult situation but also appear naïve about how large institutions operate.

If you have a problem related to a specific class, the first person to consult is the instructor. If the problem persists, then you discuss the situation with the Head of the SNHF Program and only if there is still no satisfactory resolution do you go to the SFP Director. Registration questions should be directed to the Student Advisor, Vicki Miller, who may be contacted at vmiller@montana.edu. Only in extreme cases should you even consider visiting with the CAA Dean of the College or head of the Division of Graduate Education. You also have a very capable Graduate Student Representative, David Kato, who may discuss and advocate for your individual and group situations. David may be reached at david.kato@myportal.montana.edu. You will find that the administrators, faculty, staff, and student representative are open to discussion about virtually any subject and willing to diligently work with you to resolve problems interfering with instruction, production, or personal well-being.
School of Film and Photography
Faculty and Staff Contact Information

VC = Visual Communications Building; BB = Black Box Theater

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Brief vitae for faculty and staff may be found on the School website at http://mta.montana.edu/docs/faculty.
STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Please note: Vicki Miller will coordinate your scheduling, course requirements questions, registration, and thesis-related paperwork, including your application for graduation. Jeanette Goodwin coordinates teaching assistantships, scholarships, and financial questions. Diane Steffan answers general accounting issues related to specific grants and purchases.

EQUIPMENT CHECKOUT

Equipment checkout will be the source of most of your gear, especially during the first year of production. There are very specific rules about borrowing and using the School’s film and video equipment. You will be instructed in these procedures as you begin production. Follow the rules. The equipment is a common resource for everyone in the MFA and BA programs. The gear needs to be used carefully and safely. Tony Purpura, the Film Equipment Manager, and Colette Campbell, the Assistant Film Equipment Manager, are the primary staff in Checkout. A number of student employees, from both the graduate and undergraduate programs, assist them in their work. You will need to read the general Checkout rules and sign a contract that will allow you to check out course-specific gear for the academic year. General Checkout rules and procedures will be distributed in class and are available from Checkout.

ENROLLING ON THE MFA LIST-SERVE

The MFA in SNHF program maintains an active list-serve. If you are a currently enrolled student, make sure you are a part of this list-serve. During the course of the year we send out many very important notices and information over the list serve and you will be at a severe disadvantage if you are not enrolled on it.
CONTACT INFORMATION UPDATES

Please be sure to update your contact information in your university account, as well as sending Vicki Miller (vmiller@montana.edu) an e-mail with new or contact information to ensure the information on the SNHF Contact List is current.

USEFUL WEBSITES

As you become more familiar with filmmaking and science and natural history media in particular, you will develop a need for quick access to both aesthetic and technical information. The websites below will provide help in a number of areas. This list is clearly not exhaustive, but it is a good starting point.

BBC - http://www.bbc.co.uk
Boards - http://www.boardsmag.com
National Geographic - http://www.nationalgeographic.com/tv
SMPTE - http://www.smpte.org
PBS - http://www.pbs.org/
Women Make Movies - http://www.wmm.com/
Univ. Film/Video - http://www.ufva.org/
Society for cinema & Media Studies - http://www.cmstudies.org/
Internet Movie Databate - http://www.imdb.com
HiDef.com - http://www.highdef.com/
National Science Fdn - http://news.science360.gov/
SONY - http://pro.sony.com
Final Cut Pro - http://www.apple.com/finalcutstudio/finalcutpro
TERRA: THE NATURE OF OUR WORLD

*Terra: The Nature of Our World* is a student-run web project of the MFA in SNHF Program. With weekly podcasts and periodic series on Montana Public Television, *Terra* has attracted millions of visitors to its website (http://www.lifeonterra.com) and glowing reviews. Winner of both a Webby and the designation as one of iTune’s top twenty classic sites, *Terra* is changing how information about science and natural history is both received and perceived. *Terra* seeks both student-produced films and students to assist in administering the website and producing the broadcast series. Phil Savoie is the faculty advisor to *Terra*; Andy Adkins (adkinsandy@gmail.com) and Danny Schmidt (dawgschmidt@yahoo.com) are the student producers.
The Curriculum

Enrollment

The current curriculum was developed based upon the overall goals and principles of the SNHF Program, the MFA requirements of the DGE, and the experiences of the faculty, staff, and students during the first eight years of the program. You are required to register full-time and must complete your degree within SIX years (72 calendar months) of your first enrollment. You must also maintain continuous enrollment for all terms except for the summer term following completion of your first year of study. You may take a “leave of absence” (i.e., not enroll for credits) for a maximum of three semesters, including summer semesters, during the six-year period. Exceptions are granted only in extraordinary circumstances and require joint approval from the head of the SNHF Program, the SFP Director, the Dean of Students, and the Division of Graduate Education (DGE). After the first two years of study, you must register for a minimum of three credits each semester in order to be considered enrolled. You are required to be in residence in the Bozeman area during your first two years of instruction. After the first two years, you will be working on your thesis and do not need to be in residence. You must, however, maintain the enrollment requirements outlined above.

The following curriculum will apply to all degree candidates and may include additional requirements according to the particular circumstances of your admission. Your cohort is comprised of people of varying ages, experience and education. While the majority of students will have at least one degree in science (and, in some cases, advanced degrees), there may also be students who have only minors in science. Some may have had instruction or even degrees in media production or communications. The curriculum works on the principle that no matter what your previous instruction in science or media has been, SNHF is a unique field requiring both general filmmaking training as well as specific instruction in this discipline. Specific course content may vary from year to year depending on the instructor, but the fundamental goals and purposes are consistent throughout the curriculum. After reviewing the information below, if you have questions about what courses you should be taking during your first year, consult with Dennis Aig (daig@montana.edu) or Vicki Miller (vmiller@montana.edu).
The Three Years

A minimum of 60 credits is required for the MFA Degree in Science and Natural History Filmmaking.

First Year
The first year of courses in the MFA Program in Science and Natural History Filmmaking is considered “lock-step.” These classes will provide the foundation for your historical, theoretical, and production knowledge of filmmaking generally and science and natural history production in particular. Most students in the first year are all registered for the same courses. Some required classes and electives are described as “hybrid.” This term indicates that undergraduates in their junior and senior years will also be students in these classes. It is the SFP’s belief that cooperation and collaboration among graduate and undergraduate students will benefit both groups through the sharing of their respective concentrations and knowledge. (The undergraduates generally focus on dramatic narrative filmmaking.) If you have questions, please speak with Dennis Aig or Vicki Miller regarding credit requirements and course registration.

First Year Review: At the end of the second semester of the second year, each student will meet individually with the first-year instructors to receive an assessment of his or her performance and prospect for success in the program. This review is intended to offer the students an assessment at a critical juncture in the MFA degree process. If a review is heavily negative (poor grades, poor assessment), the faculty may recommend that a student leave the Program.

Second Year
In your second year, you will be enrolled with other members of your cohort in courses related to contemporary production history and trends, science filmmaking, the second-year film production workshop, and a course in alternative nonfiction filmmaking. You will also be able to enroll a number of electives ranging from Post Production information Design to independent studies and internships. The second year offers the opportunity to consolidate the knowledge learned in the first year through increased studies and production work.

Comprehensive Exam: During the first week of the spring semester of your second year, you will take a comprehensive exam designed by a committee of three SFP faculty members. The same exam will be taken by all members of
your cohort. There will not be any variance or exceptions to this schedule, so make sure you plan for it (i.e., STUDY!). The exam will usually consist of three essay questions (one each in SNHF history, theory, and production) and will be three hours in length. All degree candidates must take and pass the comprehensive examination prior to enrolling in thesis credits. The examination is given at a single location and may not be taken off-campus or off-schedule. If you miss the examination, then you may not take it again until the following year, which could seriously disrupt your course schedule.

The Comprehensive Examination Committee and the Exam Grading
A graduate faculty committee consisting of three members will administer the exam. The committee will typically include at least one production and one studies faculty member conversant in the films and written texts that comprise the MFA screening and reading lists for which you are responsible. (See pages 33-41). The SNHF Program Head appoints the committee.

The questions will be based on the reading and viewing list included in this handbook, your course work, and any additional information provided during special seminars, lectures, or presentations during your time in the program up until the date the exam is administered. (PLEASE NOTE: An updated Reading/Viewing List will be issued by the end of the Fall 2009 Semester. You will be responsible for this list when you take your comprehensive exam.) The exam is marked high pass, pass, or fail and is graded by the three members of the committee. If any one member of the Committee fails you on either the entire or one part of the exam, you will receive a failing designation. If you fail the exam, you will be re-tested with a different but similar exam during the last week of the spring semester. If you fail the exam a second time, you must leave the Program.

The Second-Year Film: In the second semester of your second year, you will be assigned to a workshop group taught by one or more faculty members. The faculty member(s) in your second-year workshop will be responsible for overseeing your second-year film, which must be completed by May of the second year. Your second-year film may either be agenda-based (i.e., produced for a client or agency) or a film on a subject of your own choosing. If you wish, you may take a second-year film preparation class during the fall semester of your second year. This class is highly recommended for students producing agenda-based films, since working with a “client” involves many legal, aesthetic, administrative, and financial concerns not usually present in a “personal” film. You must successfully complete your second-year film before moving on to your thesis work.
Third Year

Prior to the end of your second year, you will form your Thesis Committee. The Committee must include at least three tenured, tenure-track, or continuing adjunct faculty members from the SFP. With special permission, you may include a fourth member from outside the School whose special expertise will be valuable to the completion of your thesis and your thesis film. You will submit a request on the appropriate form to the SNHF Program Head by May 10 of your second year listing the three faculty members you would prefer to have on your committee. One faculty member must be listed as the Chair. The Chair will be responsible for reviewing drafts of your thesis, rough and fine cuts of your film, and the general administration of your thesis work. The School Director and the SNHF Head will then review all the requests and decide on the chairs and committee members. Not all the decisions will follow the student requests. This system was instituted in order to allow a fair division of advising responsibilities among the faculty members. Each student’s committee members will be announced no later than June 15 of the summer semester following the Second Year. A faculty member may refuse to serve on a student’s committee and a student may object to specific faculty members. In these cases, the School Director and the SNHF Program Head will make the appropriate adjustments. When your thesis work is completed, you will defend your work both before a general group of interested individuals and then in a session with your committee.

While many students require more than one year to complete the thesis work, a number have been able to finish the SNHF Program within three years. You must register for a minimum of three credits the semester you wish to graduate.

School of Film and Photography
MFA in SNHF CURRICULUM 2009 Cohort

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<td>510 FUNDAMENTALS OF FILMAKING 3</td>
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<td>504 FILM &amp; DOC THEORY 3</td>
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<td>505 CRITICAL APPROACHES TO NATURAL HIST FILMAKING 3</td>
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<td>507 FORM &amp; THEORY OF THE IMAGE ( 1</td>
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<td>3rd year total</td>
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* Note: You must complete a total of 12 elective credits in the 2nd Year to maintain orderly progress for our degree.

** Note: You must be enrolled in at least 3 hours of thesis credit the semester you graduate.
The Thesis

The MFA graduate program requires that you submit a thesis film with a written component of no less than 5,000 words (exclusive of bibliography, footnotes, endnotes, or any supporting materials). You will be awarded a degree with thesis, which is a stronger degree than options available in other programs. Your MFA is a terminal degree and allows you to teach in a university or college.

The thesis is a year-long process. You should not try to accomplish all the goals of a thesis in a single semester because of the time it takes to successfully complete not only the film and written work but the time needed to formally defend your work and complete the necessary paperwork.

In order to begin work on your thesis, you must have completed all your coursework (including incompletes) and you must have passed your comprehensive examination. There are no exceptions to these rules.

THE THESIS FILM

Along with your written thesis, you must complete a thesis film. The film may be related to your thesis or the two may have only a tangential relationship to one another.

Length: The thesis film should be not shorter than five minutes and not longer than fifteen minutes. Some exceptions to these rules may be made at the discretion of your Committee Chair.

Focus: The focus of the thesis film is the expression your own ideas about science and natural history through a film that pushes the boundaries of nonfiction filmmaking either through content, form, or both. With your thesis film you should reveal your knowledge and understanding of other dominant modes of documentary techniques. Applying the knowledge and techniques to which you have been introduced during your course of study, you are now being asked to explore the process of making a science or natural history film that is freed of the more formal or informal considerations the typical mainstream filmmaking. The future of both your career and, perhaps, the field begins with your thesis work.
Requirements

Once your Committee is appointed, you can begin your thesis work. Your first steps are to submit and have your Thesis Committee Chair approve the following materials:

1) A Proposal and Outline for a Thesis Essay
   You must propose a topic and a central argument for your essay. The essay does not have to relate specifically to your film, although many like to make the connection. You should find a topic that is relevant specifically to science and/or natural history filmmaking. Include also a bibliography of works that you believe are central to your argument.

2) A Proposal for a Thesis Film
   You must also prepare a proposal for a film that explicitly covers both the content and the form of your proposed idea. We are awarding a degree in filmmaking, and so how you intend to make your film is as important as what you are making your film about. Therefore, take the time to clarify the aesthetic vision for your film as well as its subject matter.

Your Chair will set specific requirements about the form of your proposals and the scheduling of your work. Be sure to consult with the Chair before beginning your thesis work.

THESIS GUIDELINES

1. Do not submit any material to any committee member other than your thesis Chair without the express permission of your Chair. The thesis Chair is your primary adviser for your work and should always be aware of everything you are doing. If you are in doubt about how to proceed with any aspect of this process, consult with your Chair.

2. Communication is key. Always maintain close contact and open dialogue with your Committee Chair. Keep your thesis advisor informed, preferably in writing, of all developments regarding the evolution of your film and written thesis ideas and its production process.
3. **Paperwork.** The student must complete all required paperwork necessary to apply for graduation in a timely manner and must conform to all deadlines as posted on the DGE website. The responsibility for completing forms and meeting deadlines falls upon the student entirely, so please be diligent about what is required of you. Study the DGE website carefully and direct your questions either to the DGE or the MFA Student Coordinator/Academic Advisor. Please be aware that there is no tolerance on behalf of the DGE for late, missing, or incomplete filings on your behalf. In addition, you must be enrolled for at least three hours during the semester you intend to graduate.

4. **Avoid seeking extensions.** The deadline schedules are always very tight, and your inability to maintain the schedule may jeopardize your ability to graduate on time.

**The Defense:** When your Chair and the other committee members agree that you are ready to defend your film and thesis, a three-hour defense will be scheduled. The date and time will be publicized on campus. Friends, colleagues, faculty, and the general public will be invited to attend the first hour of the defense. The candidate will give a formal presentation about the thesis, screen the thesis film or excerpts (depending on the film’s length), and answer questions from the gathered group. After the first hour, all the guests will be asked to leave and the candidate will then defend the thesis work before his or her thesis committee. The committee will then decide if the candidate has adequately defended the work and may receive the MFA degree.

Once you have passed your comprehensive and your defense, then you must make sure that your thesis paperwork has been signed by all committee members and submitted to the DGE on or before the deadline set by DGE for that semester. It is the student’s responsibility to make sure these requirements and deadlines are met. Please note the following:

1. The deadlines for the submission of all written and film work and The required forms are usually two weeks prior to finals week; the deadline is not the end of the semester. This deadline is very important if you wish to graduate during the same semester that you defend your thesis.

2. You are required to turn in an electronic copy of your thesis prepared according to the DGE style sheet along with a DVD to the DGE. A DGE staff member will check the formatting of your thesis prior to the submission date but you are responsible for making the appointment to have our format checked. If your format does not conform to the specifications, the thesis will be rejected by the DGE.
A QUICKTIME file copy of your thesis film need to be turned into SFP Checkout.

3. If a student cannot complete the thesis work and defense by the semester deadline but can finish before the start of classes the following semester, the student may register for a one-credit extension rather than having to register for three full credits for another semester. So, for example, if a student cannot complete the thesis work before the November Fall Semester deadline but can defend during the finals week of that semester, then the student may apply for a one-credit extension that will be in effect until the day classes begin for the winter semester.

4. **SUMMER DEFENSES.** No faculty member is required to either chair or participate in a defense during the summer semester. A summer defense will be scheduled only if the chair and the other committee members unanimously agree to conduct the defense. Otherwise, the defense will have to be conducted in either the fall or spring semester.

## Registration

### 1. Registering for Courses in the MFA Program:

The Science and Natural History Filmmaking courses are restricted entry, meaning that students must have special permission to take these courses. Therefore, the Program Manager registers you in courses each semester. An e-mail is sent out to all MFA candidates each semester with a registration notification. You must let Vicki Miller know which classes you intend to take by the deadline accompanying this notice.

**Your Registration Responsibilities Include:**

1. **Making sure that you do not have a HOLD on your account.**
   A Hold on your account prevents you from registering. Holds are issued if a balance is not paid, if your immunization forms are not with the Student Health Center, or if you have not completed the proper paperwork with the Division of Graduate Education. Please check the My Info section on the MSU website to see if a hold is on your records (under the heading, “Student Services and Financial Aid,” then “Student Records,” and finally, “View Holds.”)
2. Meeting the Deadline to Inform Vicki Miller of Your Semester’s Courses.
An e-mail is sent to all students on the listserv to convey the registration deadline for the following semester.

i. Making sure that you are Registered for the Courses.
It is your responsibility to follow up and check your “My Info” account each semester to ensure that you are registered for the correct courses.

ii. Attendance Confirmation.
Attendance Confirmation is an additional step required by MSU that reinforces your intent to attend classes. This must be done by every student at the beginning of every semester. Students who have paid for their tuition and have either a zero balance or a credit balance are still required to notify the Student Accounts Office (located in Montana Hall) of your intention of taking courses. This can be done by printing out your account balance (zero or a credit), signing the bottom of the page and returning it via mail (Student Accounts, Box 172640 Bozeman, MT 59717), fax (406-994-1954) or the drop box in Montana Hall. PLEASE NOTE: If you do not confirm, your attendance each semester, then the Registrar will automatically drop you from classes.

3. Registering for Courses OUTSIDE of the MFA Program:
If you wish to take courses outside of the Media and Theatre Arts’ graduate program, you are responsible for registering yourself. In order to register on-line, you will need the following information:

a. Banner ID Number
b. PIN
c. Advisor Code
   i. First Semester Enrolled as a Student: You can get this code from the Division of Graduate Education.
   ii. Following Semesters Enrolled as a Student: A PDF (Personal Data Form) is issued for each student and given to the department. On this form is your Advisor Code. Please ask for the form from the Program Manager prior to registering on-line.
d. Schedule of Classes:
The Schedule of Classes can be found both on-line or in paper form. The paper catalog is located at the Registrar’s Office (Montana Hall).
**Important Registration Concerns & Considerations**

*Please note that if you are an International Student, you need to be registered for nine credits each semester (excluding your final thesis semester).

*If you are receiving Financial Aid, you do need to be registered for a minimum of six credits each semester.

*You must be registered for three credits to be a Teaching Assistant.

*If you are living in On-Campus Housing, you will need to be registered for five credits each semester.

*In order to be AUTOMATICALLY covered by MSU’s Health Insurance, you must be registered for a minimum of 7 credits each semester.

*400 level courses can count towards your degree, EXCLUDING 400, 470, and 490. No more than one-third of your courses may be at the 400-level.

**Please consult with MSU’s Graduate Policies On-line at [http://www.montana.edu/gradstudies](http://www.montana.edu/gradstudies) or talk with the Division of Graduate Education for further information. NOT ALL POLICIES regarding registration are listed here.**

**AN IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT ACCEPTING TUITION WAIVERS FROM OTHER DEPARTMENTS**

Because students often have advanced degrees in a variety of disciplines, it is natural that they seek assistantships from other departments who value their expertise.

We encourage students to seek assistantships from other departments. Typically compensation for an assistantship will take the form of a stipend and/or tuition waivers. Students in the MFA program **may NOT accept tuition waivers from any department or on campus** (including SFP).

The reason you may not accept tuition waivers is because of the way the MFA program is funded. Unlike most academic programs that are funded indirectly by tuition, the MFA program is funded directly by your tuition.
When you pay your tuition, the MFA program receives a major portion of that funding from the university to pay for some of the costs of the MFA Program. Therefore, when students accept tuition waivers from other departments, it seriously diminished the revenues the Program needs to keep running.

Therefore, if anyone offers you tuition waivers, you may not accept them. However, if you bring a written offer from the head of the department that stipulates the amount of waivers you would have received, the program will try to match the offer with an equivalent cash award. We cannot guarantee that we can match all offers because our scholarship funds are limited, but we will make every effort to do so.

**ABSENCES**

Each instructor has her/his own guidelines regarding absences from class and you should consult the syllabus for a course to determine what that policy is.

From time to time, however, students have asked permission to miss one, two, three or more weeks of class because of a special opportunity. The program does not allow students to exceed the normal number of absences allowed by the instructor under any circumstances.

The first year depends upon your ability to attend classes, and if you feel you have an opportunity that you cannot resist, then you should withdraw from the course. In a lock-step curriculum, withdrawing from one course usually means withdrawing from the Program.

**POLICY REGARDING INCOMPLETES**

An instructor may give a grade of "I" (Incomplete) when students have been unable to complete their academic obligations because of circumstances beyond their control. In order to receive an incomplete, you will have to petition the course instructor and submit the appropriate forms to the Registrar.

The Incomplete form requires two important pieces of information:

- what must be done to complete the requirements for the course; and,
by what date this work must be completed. This information should be shared between the instructor and the student.

Your instructor may require that you finish the work on a specific date or may give you until the end of the following semester.

Please note the following very carefully:

All responsibility falls upon the student to complete the coursework and to complete it on time.

An Incomplete will automatically turn into an “F” on the expiration date. Once you have been given an “F” that grade then becomes a permanent part of your academic record.

Do not expect to be reminded either by the instructor, the department, or the university that you have an incomplete or that your deadline for completion is approaching.

Extensions for Incompletes are given only in exceptional circumstances. The program expects all work to be completed within the time allotted on the original incomplete form. The maximum amount of time anyone can have to complete an incomplete is one full semester.

The following is the official university policy regarding Incompletes:

"I" Grade Eligibility

The University takes the position that when students register, they commit themselves to completing their academic obligations as their primary responsibility. Therefore, the instructor may give an "I" grade only in cases when students have suffered extreme personal hardship or in unusual academic situations.

The Office of Student Affairs and Services will certify personal hardship cases when students have been unable to fulfill their commitments because of illness, death or illness in the immediate family, family emergencies, or military orders. The instructor may give an "I" grade to a student thus certified, provided the student has completed three-fourths of the work of the course with a passing grade. The instructor may require that the student take an early final examination. With the exception of one and two-credit courses, early final examinations will not be given prior to the start of final examination week.
The instructor may also assign an "I" grade, subject to the department Head's approval, in cases when students have been unable to complete course requirements for reasons such as apparatus or equipment failure, death or disease in experimental animals, delays in material shipments from suppliers, or in other unusual academic circumstances which are clearly beyond the student's control. In these situations, the students must have completed three-fourths of the work of the course with a passing grade.

In each instance qualifying for an "I" grade, the instructor must fill out an "I" Grade Authorization form (available from the Registrar). On this form, the instructor will list the make-up requirements and the date beyond which the "I" will revert to an "F" grade.

The following circumstances will not make a student eligible to receive an "I" grade:

1. Absence due to participation in University activities, such as athletics, except with prior approval.
2. Travel or vacation plans which require leaving campus early at the end of the semester.
3. Attendance or participation in a wedding.
5. Failure to take one or more scheduled exams or to hand in class assignments, term papers, and project reports prior to specified deadlines.

In order to remove the "I" grade after the make-up work has been completed, the instructor will obtain the proper form from the Registrar's Office, place the grade on the form and return it to the Registrar's Office. The instructor may specify the time period within which the work must be made up. Unless the instructor gives a specified time, an "I" grade shall be made up no later than the end of the next semester the student is in attendance (excluding summer session).

An "I" grade not made up in the prescribed length of time lapses to a failure (F). However, "I" grades received during the Summer and Autumn Quarters of 1970 and Winter Quarter of 1971 will remain on the student's record until replaced by another grade.
Make-Up of "I" Grades

An "I" grade make-up is reported to the Registrar on a Grade Change form. No fee is charged.

These grades are not included on the next semester grade slip. The student’s College Dean, Academic Department and advisor are notified when "I" grades are made up. Grades of "I" or "F" are not removed from the student's permanent record.

Code of Conduct

This policy is part of the instructional design of this program and is intended to create and sustain a dialogue concerning the professional, artistic, and personal standards of conduct in the film industry. Everyone who remains in this program is expected to adhere to this professional standard.

1) I will treat everyone in this program with respect. At all times my behavior will reflect this respect for others both in their presence and outside their presence. This is to develop trust, which is the core of all meaningful relationships. I understand that without trust, all progress and all work in this program will eventually fail.

2) I will speak and conduct myself in a manner that demonstrates respect for others at all times. I understand it is disrespectful and unethical to speak of others’ talent, abilities, actions, or reputation outside their presence, and to complain about, demean, or degrade others in any way is inappropriate and unethical, and I will not tolerate it. I pledge to speak directly [one-on-one and privately] to anyone who I perceive has wronged me or with whom I have a “conflict” and I promise not to speak about them to others outside of their presence.

3) I will actively engage in the workshop milieu of this program. I understand this is an atmosphere that encourages critique, which is defined as a healthy, supportive, and constructive dialogue with each other about our work. I will do everything in my means to distinguish for myself and for others the vast difference between professional critique and personal criticism. I will not get defensive or take personally critical input from others about my work, especially when it is offered in the spirit of professional critique. I will only grow if I have the integrity to be honest with each other, and with myself.
4) I understand this code of conduct is the professional standard of conduct in the motion picture industry.

5) I understand this code of conduct is intended to help me hone the critical analysis skills necessary to achieving at the highest tier. I also understand that this policy is meant to assist me in developing the integrity and honesty required to effectively critique the work of others, let alone be honest about my own work with myself. I pledge to treat everyone with respect.
READY TO GRADUATE?

Expectations from the Division of Graduate Education

Note: Please consult the Division of Graduate Education website for all information regarding the completion of your degree and the set deadlines. We are providing you with much of the information, but not everything is covered. You are responsible for knowing the procedures for completing your degree.

Division of Graduate Education Website:
http://www.montana.edu/gradstudies/catalog.shtml

The Final Semester

Ready to graduate?

1. Please make sure that you are prepared to graduate during your designated semester. There are financial consequences to extending your graduate date another semester once you are in your designated “final” semester.

2. Students must be registered for a minimum of three credits during your term of graduation. This should not be an issue, because the Thesis: Post-Production course is five credits. However, if all of your course work is completed and you have to extend your graduation date into the next semester, you are required to take three additional credits. That said, you do have three semesters in which to take a leave of absence (including summer session) prior to registering for that final course, Thesis: Post-Production in your term of graduation. Please plan accordingly.

3. The nine-credit requirement for International Student is waived during your final semester when you will graduate.

Committee and Program of Study:

Please make sure that the “Program of Study and Committee” form is up to date before filling out the paperwork for you Application of An Advanced Degree. If you made any changes in your Program of Study, whether it be semesters that you took the course, or the courses themselves, then a “Change to Program of Study” form must be completed. The same situation applies
with your committee members, and needing to complete a “Change of Committee” form. These forms can be found on the Division of Graduate Education website.

**Application for Advanced Degree:**

1. Please fill out the “Application for Advanced Degree” form at the beginning of the term of graduation, and submit it to the Division of Graduate Education. This lets DGE know that you are intending to graduate that semester and they should be expecting your thesis materials to be submitted to them.

2. The deadlines for the form to be into the Division of Graduate Education is September 20 for fall semester, February 5 for spring semester, and June 10 for summer session.

3. All candidates for advanced degree will be charged a $30 graduation fee. The fee is generated by the Registrar’s Office upon filing the Application for Advanced Degree.

**Deadlines for Thesis Comps and Paper:**

Please remind your committee chair and the department that your evaluations and grades need to be submitted to the Division of Graduate Education no later than one week after taking the exam.

**Remember that 14 Working Days BEFORE the END of the SEMESTER is the deadline for ALL procedures regarding your thesis.**

*Make sure that you have read and re-read the Division of Graduate Education website regarding all thesis requirements and deadlines:*

[http://www.montana.edu/gradstudies/catalog.shtml](http://www.montana.edu/gradstudies/catalog.shtml)

**IMPORTANT REMINDER:** All of your thesis committee members must be present when defending your thesis. If you have a committee of three members, then two are required to physically be there, and one can be there via conference call.
ETDs
Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Submissions

The following text was submitted by the Division of Graduate Education on the new requirement for submitting theses electronically. If you have any questions or need clarifications on any detail, please consult either the DGE website or a person in the DGE office.

“Due to the large percentage of students who submitted the electronic version of their thesis or dissertation under the ETD initiative this past year, the Division of Graduate Education will require students to submit the electronic version of their thesis/dissertation beginning Fall 2004.*

The Division of Graduate Education hopes you will find this process as easy and accessible as other students have found it to be. We also hope that placing most of these documents on the internet for worldwide access will have the same benefit for graduate studies at MSU as this initiative has had at other universities.**

For your convenience, the checklists for Master's or Doctoral ETD procedures are attached to this document.

MSU joins over 150 universities in the implementation of the ETD initiative. In addition to streamlining the process for submitting, formatting, and accessing the thesis/dissertation, the following benefits have been identified in the ETD project:

• simplified and more accessible processing
• formatting standards are relaxed when it adds meaning to your document
• working through formatting issues via email instead of meeting in person
• no paper copies required by the Division of Graduate Education for MSU libraries
• ability to submit document from off campus
• less paperwork required
• more access to research
• research is available on campus
• research is accessible worldwide (enabling other universities, job prospects, publishers, and institutions access to your work on the world wide web)
• less expense to authors and libraries
• no paper costs
• no physical shelf space
• lower cataloging costs
• presentation of research adds meaning to the content of your work (The following are not usually accepted in paper format)
• color accepted
• multimedia objects and files
• dynamic presentation of data
• hyperlinks
• programs and code
• other format support
• interactive features can be included
• audiovisuals
• spreadsheets, presentations
• multiple files

Please read more about the history and procedures involved in the ETD initiative at <http://www.montana.edu/etd/>

If you have any questions regarding these new procedures or if you need to visit about special considerations please contact Jen Jencso (jennifer.jencso@montana.edu) in the Division of Graduate Education.”
Comprehensive Examination Reading and Viewing List
2009-2010
Master of Fine Arts in Science and Natural History Filmmaking

Note: this list will be updated by December 15, 2009. Members of the 2009 Cohort will be responsible for any additions or changes to the list. In addition, any texts or films required in any required class may be referenced on the Comprehensive Exam or during a thesis defense.

Books


Worth, Sol., and Adair, John. *Through Navaho Eyes: An Exploration in Film Communication and Anthropology*. 2nd Ed. Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico, Press,
Articles


Films
1. The Man With a Movie Camera (USSR, Dziga Vertov, 1929)
2. L'Age D'Or (Luis Bunuel and Salvador Dali, 1930)
3. Land Without Bread (Luis Bunuel, 1932)
4. Blood of the Beasts (Georges Franju, 1949)
5. Watch Mr. Wizard (“The H-Bomb,” 1955)
7. Salt of the Earth (Herbert Biberman, 1954)
8. Les Maitres Fous (Jean Rouch, 1955)
9. Letter From Siberia (Chris Marker, 1957)
10. Wavelength (Michael Snow, 1967)
11. Primate (Frederick Wiseman, 1974)
12. Connections (Mick Jackson, 1979)
14. Shoah (Claude Lanzmann, 1985)
15. Sherman’s March (Ross McElwee, 1986)
17. In Search of the Edge (Scott Barrie, 1990)
18. Zoo (Frederick Wiseman, 1993)
19. An Injury to One (Travis Wilkerson, 2002)
20. Dragons' World: A Fantasy Made Real (Justin Hardy, 2004)
22. Surname Viet, Given Name Nam, (Trinh Minh-ha, 1989)
24. Nanook of the North, (Robert Flaherty, 1922)
25. Chang, A Drama of the Wilderness, Merian Cooper and Ernest Schoedsack, 1927
26. Simba, Martin and Osa Johnson, 1928
27. Various films, Jean Painlevé
28. Bambi, Walt Disney, 1942
29. The Story of the Weeping Camel, Byambasuren Dayaa and Luigi Falorni, 2004
30. March of the Penguins, Luc Jacquet, 2005
31. Grizzly Man, Werner Herzog, 2005
32. The Elephant, the Emperor, and the Butterfly Tree, Alastair MacEwen and Sean Morris, 2003
33. Beaver Valley, Walt Disney, 1949
34. Winged Migration, Jacques Perrin, 2001
35. Social Behavior of Rhesus Monkeys, C. R. Carpenter, 1947
36. The Social Behavior of the Laughing Gull, Gladwyn Kingsley Noble, 1940
37. Death by Design, Peter Friedman and Jean-Francois Brunet, 1996
38. Night Mail (Harry Watt and Basil Wright, 1936)
39. The River (Pare Lorentz, 1937)
40. Triumph of the Will (Leni Riefenstahl, 1935)
41. Olympia (Leni Riefenstahl, 1938)
42. Why We Fight: Prelude to War (Frank Capra, 1942)
43. The Four Hundred Million (Joris Ivens and John Ferno, 1939)
44. Primary (Robert Drew, 1960)
45. *Harvest of Shame* (Fred W. Friendly, 1960)
47. *The Year of the Pig* (Emile de Antonio, 1968)
48. *Hearts and Minds* (Peter Davis, 1974)
49. *Harlan County, U.S.A.* (Barbara Kopple, 1976)
50. *The Battle of Algiers* (Gillo Pontecorvo, 1966)
52. *This is Spinal Tap* (Rob Reiner, 1984)
54. *Hoop Dreams* (Steve James, 1994)
55. *Silverlake Life: The View from Here* (Peter Friedan and Tom Joslin, 1993)
56. *Brother’s Keeper* (Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky, 1992)
57. *Ghost of the Abyss* (James Cameron, 2003)
59. *Sweet Sweetback’s Baaddasssss Song* (Melvin Van Peebles, 1971)