



**MFA PHOTOGRAPHY, VIDEO &
RELATED MEDIA**

*All you need to know
and ever wanted to know
about your*

THESIS
2011/12

Table of Contents

Thesis Schedule (calendar of deadlines).....	3
Guidelines for Thesis Candidates.....	5
Fall Semester (thesis proposal).....	6
Spring Semester (thesis paper).....	6
Oral Presentation.....	7
Degree Completion	7
Department Exhibition and Video Screening.....	8
Thesis Paper Format.....	9
Visual Documentation Format.....	9
Sample Title Page of Thesis Paper	10
Thesis Advisor.....	11

THESIS SCHEDULE

FALL SEMESTER

Tuesday, September 27th, 1:30-3:00 p.m., Rm. 104	General Meeting – all thesis students must attend.
Monday, October 3rd	Deadline to commit to a video thesis. In rare cases any thesis changing to a video after this date will need to be approved by Charles Traub and Ed Bowes. This change may affect student's thesis forms instructor.
Months of September, October through November	Thesis Forms teachers will give deadlines for various drafts through out the semester. Ed Bowes will determine schedule for video students.
Mid to end of November - dates to be announced	Individual counseling appointments (twenty minutes) with Charles, Sarah and Ed to determine thesis advisor.
Week of November 14th (deadline is firm). Due to thesis instructors during this week's thesis classes.	Final draft of thesis proposal due to Thesis Forms & Master Critique instructors. Student will be judged as "ready to enter thesis" by consensus of the chair, the student's critique, and forms teacher. The proposal will include artwork supporting a written proposal of the project. Video students will submit draft to Grahame or Patty and Ed Bowes.
Monday, December 5th	Notification of approved thesis proposal. Proposals will be returned to the student and will receive one of two results: approval to proceed with project or project will need to be further conceptualized and proposal rewritten with supporting artwork. This might cause completion of project to be delayed and a thesis extension would be recommended.
Tuesday, December 6th, 1 - 3 PM	Individual student meetings with Charles to review those proposals not approved.
Monday, December 12th	Final proposal due to Adam Bell with critique and forms instructor's signature.

SPRING SEMESTER

Months of January, February and March	Students will be given deadlines by their individual forms and critique teachers to hand in various drafts of the thesis paper to those respective teachers.
<i>Monday, March 5th through Sun, March 11th</i>	<i>Spring Break</i>
Monday, March 19 th	3 copies of finished Thesis Paper due to Adam Bell (to be delivered to Orals Committee); In addition to the Thesis Papers, video students are required to include the following: students working in single channel, whether for traditional or new media distribution and presentation, must present a fine cut of their project, and a presentation vehicle for new media; students working in installation must submit detailed plans of the final installation, along with budgets and schedules for fabrication. Please note: These do not need to be signed, but please include the cover sheet with your forms, critique and thesis advisor's names.
Saturday, March 31 st	Thesis Orals (student presentations to Committee of three faculty members)
Week of April 2 nd	Meetings with Thesis Forms instructors (days and times to be determined by instructors).
Week of April 16 th	Final thesis paper due to Thesis Forms & Master Critique instructors (faculty is responsible to sign and return to student by Friday, April 29 th). Ed Bowes, Patty Chang and Grahame Weinbren will sign video thesis papers.
Friday, April 27th (DEADLINE IS EXTREMELY CRUCIAL)	Completed thesis project given to Adam Bell , (includes two copies of thesis paper – with signatures on cover page) and two copies of visual documentation of artwork (CD, DVD, etc.). This deadline is EXTREMELY crucial , as the school will not release diploma without documentation.
Friday, May 11 th (tentative)	Commencement

THESIS GUIDELINES

Understanding and adhering to the guidelines discussed here and in thesis meetings will help insure a successful project. Students are responsible to attend all meetings, meet all deadlines, and stay aware of all updates as they occur. There may be changes to this information, which will be distributed promptly.

What is a Thesis?

The thesis project is the main and most significant aspect of your master's year work. The thesis project is a creative endeavor and an original investigation of a specific viewpoint. Because the MFA degree is a terminal degree in this field, it is expected that the project be at the highest level of visual artistic work. It must be a *cohesive* body of work. It must bear up to the scrutiny of the creative community, and further our understanding of its specific investigation.

The project follows as a result of the candidate's thesis proposal as a unique body of artwork, demonstrating the capacity to push the limits of what is possible in the multi-faceted realms of the visual arts. It will be understood and evaluated within the terms that you yourself define. This definition comes from your written proposal as well as your thesis statement (which are due in mid- November and mid-March respectively). They are meant to direct and define the goals and terms, which render your work significant.

The main component of the thesis is a body of work completed by the student during the spring semester that employs photographic, video, film, computer-generated images, or related practices. Accompanying this portfolio is a supporting paper that documents and assesses the development of that work.

An independent committee of three faculty members will evaluate the finished project through a process called "Thesis Orals". The student will supply their paper to the committee prior to the student presenting their project in front of the committee. While subjectivity is inherent in such judgments, be assured that the committee's demand for quality will be unbending. Any student who does not receive a passing grade for thesis will not be eligible for degree conferral.

Preparation

Together, a portfolio, thesis proposal and thesis paper reflect an academic year's worth of intensive exploration and accomplishment. The spring semester of your second year will be an intense period during which creative work and production develops into a cohesive whole. This process begins long before the spring semester – in the summer of your first year at the latest. Before beginning of the fall semester of your thesis year, you should already be examining your work critically, considering what creative direction you might be heading into and where you are aiming to be in six months. Discuss your work and ideas with the Chairperson, your peers, critique instructors, and your other sources of creative inspiration. Get your creative juices flowing and focus your thinking into a raw concept for your project.

Remember that it is always best to set realistic goals for the size and scope of the project based on your personal funds, necessary equipment, and other resources.

FALL SEMESTER

Thesis Proposal

The thesis proposal is a carefully thought out plan for your master's thesis project, and will be due during the week of November 14th. *(If you are planning on working with video in your thesis project, you must commit to video by October 3rd, 2011).* Your proposal should state the medium and general format of your intended thesis project, to be completed during the spring semester. It should reflect the research and consideration you have given to the formulation of your project, the project's central idea(s), as well as the specific means you intend to utilize in order to synthesize or realize these ideas within the proposed format. This proposal should show an awareness of the historical and cultural context in which your work is situated as well as its influences, and personal or social factors that bear upon its significance in a larger cultural milieu.

All thesis proposals must be written in proper English and should be copy edited for spelling and punctuation. Your thesis proposal should function as a strategy or game plan that facilitates, directs, and focuses the body of your project. It is meant to serve as a plan for you and your faculty, as well as a reference for understanding the ideas, goals, and intentions of your project. A preliminary visual representation of your work is required with the thesis proposal. You may also include visual references of others' work if beneficial to the overall understanding and concept, however this is not required.

SPRING SEMESTER

Students entering their thesis project semester (typically spring of 2nd year) must also have completed all required coursework, have a B+ average to date (3.3 GPA), no outstanding incomplete grades, and no student account "holds" for failure to meet financial obligations.

Thesis Paper

The thesis paper is a supporting document and should not eclipse the artwork. Nonetheless, an MFA degree requires verbal and written evidence of both intelligent, creative decision-making, and an awareness of the historical and contemporary context of the work.

Your thesis statement (paper), which will accompany your thesis project, should state the form (medium/format) of your thesis project, as well as the main idea or ideas that you have explored. It should locate your work within a historical and cultural context and state the reasons, personal or social, for addressing these concerns. It is expected that your thesis project will make a contribution to the culture it addresses. It should, therefore, place itself within a larger sense of the world and your personal concerns should be articulated with an awareness of their

historical position. This statement need not be long, but it should be clear and focused. This statement will serve as an archive or notation of the project you have completed and should compliment the more extensive analysis you have outlined in your proposal.

Statements should be in clear, concise English and copy edited for grammar, punctuation, and spelling. This statement need not exceed five pages in length. The faculty committee on your Orals panel will have read it and will use it as a guideline to understanding and interpreting your project. Each student's final thesis statement will be bound and archived with a record of your project. Visual representations, either photos or diagrams of your work or others, may be incorporated into the paper but are not necessary.

The accompanying "thesis format", "visual documentation format", and "sample title page" detail the specific presentation requirements for the thesis project. You will also find it helpful to study selected graduates' thesis books, not as models to imitate, but as evidence of the great variety of approaches to presentation and writing that are acceptable within the given guidelines.

Thesis Oral Presentation

Each candidate will be required to present and orally defend their work in a twenty minute closed session before a committee of three faculty members on **Saturday, March 31st, 2012**. As stated previously, your thesis paper will be given to the committee prior to the oral presentation so that the committee will approach your work with an awareness of your ideas. Your **thesis papers are due to Adam Bell on March 19th** for delivery to the Committee. If you are working in time-based media (e.g. video), you must submit a copy of a fine cut of your video along with the paper to Adam Bell by March 21st. This rough cut will be given to the committee for them to view prior to the oral presentation. You may also submit and upload your video on Vimeo for the committee to review. Please provide any necessary passwords and email Adam the link.

Please note: The papers do not need to be signed, but please include the cover sheet with your forms, critique and thesis advisor's names.

Degree Completion

A completed thesis project must be presented to Adam Bell by **Friday, April 27th, 2012**. The Department will bind your thesis (visual documentation and your thesis paper) and it will become a permanent record in the school's archives, available for review by the public and future students.

You are required to submit the following:

- Documentation of *finished* creative work: 2 copies of visual representation of project (2 CDs or 2 DVDs). (CDs of photographs must include at least 20 clearly marked JPGs – 8x10 300ppi – along with a PDF list of images)
- Thesis Paper: 2 copies of the completed thesis paper (printed on 8.5 x 11

paper). Cover page of paper must have signatures from your master critique instructor and thesis forms instructor.

Be aware that there are a number of important administrative prerequisites for graduation that are established by the school. A list of the school deadlines will be distributed early in the spring semester. Failure to meet any one of them will prevent you from graduating in May. Please see Adam if you have any questions.

The **April 27th, 2012** deadline is firm. No exceptions will be made. Failure to complete any of these requirements by semester's end or to obtain final project approval by unanimous decision of the thesis committee will necessitate continuing the thesis into the following semester. In such a situation, the student must register for a thesis extension, (3 credits), and pay the corresponding tuition and fees.

Department Exhibition and Video Screening

The main purpose of the thesis is to create a finished body of work, not an exhibition - and you will not be required to exhibit in order to graduate. However, a secondary goal of the thesis process for students is to produce a body of work that is both compelling and polished enough to present to the gallery, museum, or media worlds as a platform for career growth and recognition. SVA has a remarkable exhibition space, Visual Arts Gallery at 601 West 26th Street and the Department presents an exhibition of thesis students at the end of the academic year in this space. The dates will be announced as the year progresses.

As an artist, you should realize that it would be in your interest and within your capabilities to pursue non-student venues for the realization of your individual and collective accomplishments.

VIDEO STUDENTS: In order to participate in the video screening, you **MUST** submit the following – 1 master tape to Michelle for the screening, 2 DVD copies of the final cut to Adam, and 1 1-minute clip for thw web and/or promotional purposes (all clips must be Quicktime, uncompressed on a CD or DVD).

Finally, faculty members other than your thesis instructors, your peers, and the Chairperson are your richest resources. Seek their advice and feedback when you have the need.

Thesis Paper Format

The following are requirements for the thesis format and presentation.

Your paper should follow *MLA Handbook* (Modern Library Association) style (i.e. double spaces; one-inch margins; inserted quotes indented, italicized, single-spaced). The SVA library has copies of the *MLA Handbook* for your reference. MLA style should also be followed for footnotes/endnotes.

According to MLA style, please use short parenthetical citations within the text followed by a works cited document.

Examples:

Citation in text:

This concern has been expressed (Dover 118-21).

Works Cited List (included in end):

Nabokov, Vladimir. *Lolita*. New York: Putnam, 1955.

You can also refer to this website for more examples:

<http://www.library.cornell.edu/resrch/citmanage/mla>

- All papers must be submitted in TIMES NEW ROMAN 12pt font
- All papers must be double-spaced
- The cover sheet must follow the exact cover sheet as enclosed in the THESIS GUIDELINES PACKET
- When you turn in your final paper, you must have your Thesis Forms and Critique signatures. Charles can sign it later. You do not need your thesis advisor's signature.

VISUAL DOCUMENTATION FORMAT

Submit two copies of visual documentation. You may record your project on a CD or DVD. Photography projects must include at least 20 images - 8x10 300ppi images. Video projects should include a DVD of the final edit, and/or documentation of the installation and project. Each item to be submitted should include the following information: Last Name, first name, thesis project title, medium of artwork, and if appropriate, the size dimensions (h., w., d.), and/or time length of video program. Handwritten information is not acceptable.

(sample title page for Thesis Paper)

TITLE

(first name and last name)

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the
School of Visual Arts
Master of Photography, Video and Related Media Thesis

(date)

Master Critique

Instructor: (Name of Instructor; SIGNATURE REQUIRED:)_____

Thesis Forms

Instructor: (Name of Instructor; SIGNATURE REQUIRED:)_____

Chairperson Charles H. Traub: _____

Thesis Advisors

Charles Traub, along with the thesis faculty, will invite faculty and outside artists to act as thesis advisors. Below are brief descriptions of the advisor process and what will be required of you.

- Counseling appointments about selecting a thesis advisor will be set up in November.
- You will be required to meet with your advisor four times between the December and the end of April. This will give you three meetings prior to your orals and one final meeting in April after the orals. Oral presentations will be Saturday, March 31st, 2012.
- Do not under any circumstances contact someone who you wish to be your advisor unless directed to do so by Charles. If you have someone in mind, let us know and we will formally contact them.