



MFA PHOTOGRAPHY, VIDEO AND RELATED MEDIA

*All you need to know
(and ever wanted to know)
about your...*

THESIS
2017/18

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THESIS SCHEDULE

FALL SEMESTER 2017

Monday, September 25th 1:30-2:30 p.m., Big Room	General Meeting – all thesis students must attend.
Monday, October 9 ^h	Deadline to commit to a video and/or installation thesis. In rare cases, anyone changing their work to do a video after this date will need to get approval from Department Chair and Ed Bowes. This change may affect student's Thesis Forms instructor.
Months of September, October, and November	Thesis Forms instructor will give deadlines for various drafts through out the semester. Ed Bowes will determine schedule for video students.
Mid- to end of November	Individual counseling appointments (twenty minutes) with Charles and thesis faculty to determine thesis mentor.
November 1 - 23	Time window to submit Thesis Proposal and supporting work.
Monday, November 20 th before 5pm EST (deadline is firm).	Final draft of thesis proposal due. Students must submit their proposal to Adam Bell via email. Up to 10 still images should be embedded in a PDF of the written proposal. For video: up to 10 minutes of video should be uploaded to Vimeo and links sent via email with the written proposal. Students must ALSO submit proposals to Thesis Forms & Master Critique instructors. Student will be judged as "ready to enter thesis" by consensus of the Chair, the student's Master Critique and Thesis Forms instructors, and a review by faculty.
Thursday, November 30 th	Notification of approved thesis proposal. Proposals will be returned to students, who will receive one of two results: approval to proceed with project, or project needs further conceptualization and proposal rewrites with supporting artwork. This might cause delays for completion of project and a thesis extension may be recommended.
Tuesday, December 5 th , 1-3pm	Individual student meetings with Charles to review unapproved proposals .
Monday, December 11 th	Final proposal due to Adam Bell, Acad. Advisor

SPRING SEMESTER 2018

Months of January, February, and March

Students will be given deadlines by their individual Thesis Forms and Master Critique instructors to hand in various drafts of the thesis paper to those instructors.

Mon., March 5th – Sun., March 9th

Spring Break, no classes

Monday, March 19^h

PDF copies of finished Thesis Paper due to Adam Bell (to be delivered to Orals Committee). In addition to the Thesis Papers, students working in single channel video, 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. **Any student proposing an installation MUST submit a short 1-page installation proposal to their committee.**

Please note: These papers do not need to be signed, but please include the cover page with your Thesis Forms and Master Critique instructors' names.

Saturday, March 31st

Thesis Orals (student thesis presentations to committee of three faculty members).

Week of April 2nd

Meetings with Thesis Forms instructors (days and times to be determined by instructors).

Week of April 9th

Final thesis paper due to Thesis Forms & Master Critique instructors (faculty is responsible for signing and returning to student before Friday, April 24).

Thursday, April 19st at 5pm
(VERY IMPORTANT DEADLINE)

Completed thesis project turned in to Adam Bell. Includes one physical copy of thesis paper with signatures on cover page, and visual documentation of artwork uploaded to server. All signatures must be on single cover sheet. **This deadline is very important**, as the school will not release diploma without documentation.

Early to mid-May

Commencement (Date TBD)

THESIS GUIDELINES

Understanding and adhering to the guidelines discussed here and in thesis meetings will help ensure a successful project. Students are responsible for attending all meetings, meeting all deadlines, and staying aware of all updates as they occur. There may be changes to this information, which will be distributed via email accordingly.

What is a Thesis?

The thesis project is the primary and most significant aspect of your work in graduate school. 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. These are meant to direct and define the goals and terms that 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 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 pass any one of the following: Master Critique, Thesis Forms, and/or Thesis Orals 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 thesis 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, and should start in the summer after your first year at the latest. Before the fall semester of your thesis year, you should already be examining your work critically, considering in what creative direction you might be heading, and thinking about where you want to be in six months. Discuss your work and ideas with the Department Chair, your peers, critique instructors, and 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.

Installation

The department has limited support for installation work. In addition to the Greenpoint Studios, which are awarded by application, the department has a limited number of spaces that can be used to install, test and hang work. If students wish to work in this manner, they must begin to do so ASAP and regularly show this work installed in critique classes for proper feedback. **Remember, an installation is not simply filling a space with stuff, but a site-specific work that activates and transforms the perception of a space.** We encourage students to take advantage of all aspects of technology from video and interactive online content, to VR and 3D printing as a viable means of expression with the potential of reaching expanded audiences outside of the conventional space of the white box.

Thesis Mentors

The Department Chair will invite outside artists, editors, gallery representatives, and other notable people in the art world to act as thesis mentors, to meet with thesis students during their thesis year. Below are brief descriptions of the mentor process and what will be required of you.

- Counseling appointments about selecting a thesis mentor will be set up in November. You will be sent a list of potential mentors and then will submit a list of 3-4 choices in November after consulting with Charles and thesis faculty.
- You will be required to meet with your mentor four times between December and the end of April. Try to have one meeting in late-Dec and January, and the rest in the Spring semester. Oral presentations will be **Saturday, March 31st, 2018**.
- **Do not under any circumstances contact someone who you wish to be your mentor.** If you have someone in mind, relay this to your thesis faculty, Charles, and Adam Bell, and he will formally contact them with all the information they need.

FALL SEMESTER

Thesis Proposal

The thesis proposal is a carefully thought out plan for your master's thesis project, and will be due by **November 20th at 5pm EST**. (*If you are planning on working with video in your thesis project, you must commit to video by Monday, October 9, 2017*). 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.

The proposal and supporting artwork **MUST** be submitted to Adam via email and turned in to your Thesis Forms and Master Critique instructors. All submissions must be turned

in between November 1 and November 23.

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 to accompany the thesis proposal. You may also include visual references of others' work if beneficial to the overall understanding and concept, but this is not required. A typical length of a proposal is between 4-5 pages of written text. Your proposal **must** do the following:

1. Clearly outline the nature of your work – both it's physical and conceptual manifestation.
2. Visual support either in the form of video stills, video links, installation shots, photographs. You must provide enough visual evidence of work to support the claims you make in the proposal, as well as a rough outline for the completion of the project.
3. The contextual and historical precedents for your work and your influences.
4. Thesis proposal must also include a list of references and research that pertain to your work and can include books, movies, article links etc.... This is separate from citations that may appear in your proposal or paper, and should be a part of your ongoing research pertaining to your work.
5. Bibliography (**PLEASE NOTE:** The research and bibliography/works cited are two different things.)

SPRING SEMESTER

Students entering their thesis project semester (typically the spring semester of their final 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.

All thesis students must be registered for both Thesis Project and Thesis Project – Presentation. In addition to Thesis Project (6 credits), the critique class, all thesis students must be registered for Thesis Project – Presentation (3 credits), which can only be passed once the student has successfully passed orals and submitted all the necessary written and visual documentation for their thesis. The department chair reviews all reports and documents from the panel and is in discussion with the student's thesis Forms and Project teachers as well their thesis advisor and will determine the pass or fail for this course.

Thesis Paper

The thesis paper is a supporting document and should not eclipse the artwork. Nevertheless, 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. This is a lasting permanent record of your project that will be archived in the department.

Your thesis 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. Your paper **MUST** locate your work within a historical and cultural context and state the reasons, personal or social, for addressing these concerns. Papers need not be strictly academic in tone, but must find a way to include this information, as an addendum or separate section. 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. Typically, papers are 5-8 pages long without images. This paper will serve as an archive or notation of the project you have completed and should complement the more extensive analysis you have outlined in your proposal. Papers should be written in clear, concise English and copy edited for grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

All papers must include a bibliography/works cited of books, articles, films and texts cited in the paper. This is separate from the research list included in your proposal, and which should NOT be included in your final paper. Inspirations and influences should be discussed in the paper and part of your effort to contextualize your work. A list of influences is not sufficient contextualization.

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. It is helpful to include visual representations, either photos or diagrams of your work, in the paper, for reference and context.

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, 2018**. Thesis orals are an evaluation of the finished state of your work and are a key component of the Thesis Project – Presentation course. You are being evaluated on the merits of what you show and defend at orals. You must demonstrate that you've completed your project as described in your paper and can realize it in all aspects of its production and display, including the exhibition or screening. All students must present their work in its final intended form for orals. Students whose work is an installation must present their installation in physical space for successful completion of orals. **Any student proposing an installation MUST submit a short 1-page installation proposal to their committee.**

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. The papers do not need to be signed at this time, but please include the cover page with your Thesis Forms and Master Critique instructors' names.

If you are working in time-based media (e.g. video), you must submit a Vimeo link to a **fine cut** of your video along with the paper to Adam Bell by **March 22nd**. This fine cut will be given to the committee for them to view prior to the oral presentation. Please provide any necessary passwords and email Adam the link.

If a student does not pass the 1st round of orals, they are required to represent their

work in front of another committee in approximately 2 weeks. In the rare case that a student still does not pass, they will fail Thesis Project – Presentation and are required to register for a 3-credit thesis extension the following fall and pay any department fees and tuition credit fees. They are then required to present in front of another committee in December.

Degree Completion

A completed thesis project must be presented to Adam Bell by **Thursday, April 19th, 2018 by 5pm**. This is the final component of the Thesis Project – Presentation course. The Department will bind 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:

- Visual representation of project

PHOTO: 10-20 clearly marked .jpeg files – 8x10 300ppi – along with a PDF list of images uploaded to server in the thesis folder. (If you've created a book, you must also submit a PDF of the book separately.)

VIDEO: A QuickTime trailer, excerpt of the video, and/or video stills for the thesis website should be created and uploaded to the department server by the **April 19th, 2018** final submission deadline. An uncompressed QuickTime screening ready video must be uploaded to the server by **the deadline set by Michelle**.

****If your work includes both still and moving image, you must submit both.** You may also include screenshots and installation shots in addition to (but not instead of) your images or video. If your work is sculptural, include photos of it separately.

- Thesis Paper: 2 copies of the completed thesis paper (printed on 8.5 x 11 paper). The cover page of your paper must have signatures from your Master Critique instructor and Thesis Forms instructor. **(ORIGINAL SIGNATURES ONLY – NO JPGS , SCANS OR COPIES.)** Paperclip or binder clip pages together – do not staple! **YOU MUST USE SAME FORMAT AS THE SAMPLE COVER PAGE BELOW.** You must also upload a PDF copy of your paper to the department server. Please make sure your PDF is smaller than 3mb. Save it as a reduced size PDF if necessary.

The accompanying "thesis paper format," "visual documentation format," and "sample cover page" outlines listed below detail the specific presentation requirements for the thesis project. You will also find it helpful to study selected graduates' thesis papers (available in the Visual Arts Library), 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.

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 19th, 2018** final submission 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 Thesis Exhibition and Screening

The main purpose of the thesis is to create a finished body of work, **not** an exhibition, and you are not 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. The summer following the academic year, the 2017 Thesis Exhibition will be held at the SVA Chelsea Gallery at 601 West 26 Street, and the 2017 Thesis Screening will be held at the SVA Theatre at 333 West 23 Street. These events are usually held in June, but exact dates are TBA.

Faculty members typically curate both the Thesis Exhibition and Screening. They have the final say regarding what work is displayed, and how it is exhibited. The Exhibition especially is a group show wherein all artists must share space, and the curator is the authority that decides what kind of presentation may or may not be appropriate for the show. Meetings with the curator of the exhibition begin in February and continue throughout the Spring semester until the show.

BOOKS – Students who plan on showing a book as part of their exhibition should take PHG-5416 *Studio: Photo Books—Past, Present and Future* in the Fall of their thesis year or sooner, and must have their book approved by the curator, Department and appropriate thesis faculty.

INSTALLATIONS – Students who plan on presenting their work as an installation must also present their work as such at orals and have their installation plans approved by the curator, Department and appropriate thesis faculty.

As an artist, you should also realize that it would be in your interest and within your capabilities to pursue venues outside SVA for the realization of your individual and collective accomplishments throughout your matriculation.

Students Participating in the Thesis Screening:

A QuickTime trailer, excerpt of the video, and/or video stills for the thesis website should be created and uploaded to the department server by the **April 19th, 2018** final submission deadline. A final, uncompressed, screening ready QuickTime file of your video should be uploaded to the thesis website folder on the department server by **the deadline set by Liz**. A final cut on external hard drive must also be submitted to Liz for review in the theatre by the deadline.

Finally, faculty members other than your thesis instructors, your peers, and the Department Chair are your richest resources. Seek their advice and feedback.

Promotional Material for Show or Screening

Students are allowed and encouraged to produce their own promotion material (exhibition cards) for the show and screening. **However**, all promotional material must include the SVA logo, acknowledge that it is the MFA Photography, Video and Related

Media Department Thesis Exhibition or Screening, and **must** be approved by Randy West or Charles Traub. Failure to adhere to these will result in the removal of said material. All films must also include the department logo as part of their credits.

THESIS PAPER FORMAT

The following are requirements for the thesis format and presentation. Please note: A PDF of your paper and an image list must be uploaded to the department server along with the visual documentation.

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

Please see the link below for details and specifications:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

According to MLA style, please use short parenthetical citations within the text, followed by a Works Cited page.

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.

- All papers must be submitted in TIMES NEW ROMAN 12pt font.
- All papers must be double-spaced.
- The cover page must follow the exact format of the sample cover page on Page 10 of this packet.
- Your final paper must be signed by your Thesis Forms and Master Critique instructors and include all original signatures (no scans or jpgs).
- **Your paper must be accompanied by a Works Cited page.**

VISUAL DOCUMENTATION FORMAT

Your visual documentation must include the following:

- Photography projects must include 10-20 hi-res images – 8x10 300ppi .jpeg files – uploaded to the department server. Video or installation projects should include an uncompressed QuickTime video of the final edit uploaded to the server, and/or documentation of the installation and project.
- A PDF list uploaded to the server that includes 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.
- You must also upload a PDF copy of your thesis paper to the server.

- *sample cover page for Thesis Paper* -

TITLE

Your First 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] _____

Thesis Forms

Instructor: [Name of Instructor] _____

Department Chair: Charles H. Traub _____