Clusters

Instead of detailed distribution requirements or strict tracks, the Media Arts major offers a series of “clusters” that can serve student specializations while still allowing a general introduction to the broader field. Prior to enrolling in the culminating Capstone Colloquium in the fourth year, each student will declare a cluster.

Each cluster will include a balance of coursework in theoretical, historical, and practice-based areas. In order to demonstrate a meaningful commitment to a cluster, students should take at least three related courses and complete a component of their Colloquium portfolio project based on their specialization. The eligibility of a given course to count toward a given cluster will not be pre-defined and will instead be determined after an individualized consultation with the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

The clusters will help students achieve depth in a particular area, which will put them in a stronger position to apply for graduate programs and pursue careers in media arts and design following graduation. Available clusters are based on areas that have garnered significant student interest and in which MAAD has substantial course offerings.

1. Games
2. Creative Computing
3. Electronic Music
4. Digital Moving Image
Games
The Games cluster is best for students interested in pursuing the study and/or design of games. Students can focus on any types of games they’d like – video games, card games, role playing games, and more.

Pathways in this cluster can include the pursuit of theoretical/historical study of games, game design, games journalism, the industry and economics of games, and other projects. Students in the game cluster should include a design element in their capstone project, whether that is creating a short digital game, a card game, or a video essay about a game. Key faculty for this cluster include Patrick Jagoda, Ian Jones, Chris Carloy, Ashlyn Sparrow, and Heidi Coleman.

Sample Games Pathway
2 Media Theory Courses
MAAD 12320: Critical Videogame Studies
MAAD 25630: Videogames and Genre Storytelling

2 Media History Courses
MAAD 25416: 1990s Videogame History
MAAD 17010: Gaming History

2 Media Practice and Design Courses
MAAD 20500: ARTGAMES
MAAD 23220: Inventing, Engineering, and Understanding Interactive Devices

5 Elective Courses
MAAD 14350: Videogame Level Design
MAAD 22322: Introduction to Game Design
MAAD 24820: Video Game Music Production and Sound Design
MAAD 22911: Augmented Reality Production
MAAD 11730: Science, Technology and Media via Japan
Creative Computing
Creative Computing in itself is a vast field and includes software art, glitch aesthetics, neural network, internet art, tactical media, and AI-based art. This work is happening here at the University in the Department of Visual Art and by artists such as Jon Satrom and Jason Salavon. Other key faculty in this cluster include Nick Briz, Pedro Lopes, Diana Franklin, and Ken Nakagaki,

Sample Creative Computing Pathway
2 Media Theory Courses
MAAD 10440: Desiring Machines
MAAD 14109: Machine Learning at the Archive

2 Media History Courses
MAAD 18306: Data History: Information Overload from the Enlightenment to Google
MAAD 25201: Art and Machine Intelligence

2 Media Practice and Design Courses
MAAD 23631: Internet Art I
MAAD 23632: Internet Art II

5 Elective Courses
MAAD 22502: Data and Algorithm in Art
MAAD 22920: Art and Digital Fabrication
MAAD 32655: Collaborative Artware
MAAD 23281: Topics in Human Computer Interaction
MAAD 23645: Body and the Digital
Electronic Music
Students creating electronic music will use digital tools and instruments while also learning the practice and theory of digital signal processing. The Music Department has an Electronic Music Studio that students can take advantage of for their projects. Key faculty to note include Paula Harper, David Bird, Jennifer Iverson, Nick Briz, and Takashi Shallow.

Sample Electronic Music Pathway
2 Media Theory Courses
MAAD 12422: Hearing Popular Music
MAAD 13020: Opera Across Media

2 Media History Courses
MAAD 15521: Music and the History of AI
MAAD 16718: Approaches to Live Electronics

2 Media Practice and Design Courses
MAAD 24618: Electronic Music I: Composing with Sound
MAAD 24817: Electronic Music II: Introduction to Computer Music

5 Elective Courses
MAAD 14723: Divas, Idols, Material Girls: Gender and Sexuality in Music Videos
MAAD 24820: Video Game Music Production and Sound Design
MAAD 26720: Musical Robotics
MAAD 22506: Online Algorithmic Music
MAAD 17212: Sonic Cultures of Japan
Digital Moving Image
Digital Moving Image includes gifs, editing, and experimental work in cinema and images. Partnering with CMS, we offer many courses in Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, and filmmaking in various formats. This cluster also allows for the study of contemporary and non-traditional digital moving images, such as tiktoks, social media movements that make use of digital images and platforms, memes, and more. Key faculty in this area include Daniel Morgan, Marc Downie, Ilana Emmett, and Scott Wolniak.

Sample Digital Moving Image Pathway
2 Media Theory Courses
MAAD 14570: Animation Theory
MAAD 14110: Digital Cinema

2 Media History Courses
MAAD 15300: The Loop as Form
MAAD 15630: Television in an Age of Change

2 Media Practice and Design Courses
MAAD 23930: Documentary Production I
MAAD 12931: Documentary Production II

5 Elective Courses
MAAD 24540: Multimedia Fashion Design
MAAD 21011: Experimental Captures
MAAD 24910: Short Form Digital Storytelling: Creating a Web Series
MAAD 24920: Virtual Reality Production
MAAD 27022: Surveillance Media