Modern Culture and Media

Modern Culture and Media (MCM) is an interdisciplinary concentration that explores the ties between media and broader cultural and social formations. We stress creative thinking and critical production: comparative analysis and theoretical reflection, as well as work that integrates practice and theory. We thus bring together aspects of modern culture that are normally separated by departmental structures such as film and media studies, fine art, literature, literary arts and philosophy. This concentration offers the student a range of possible specializations. A student might decide to focus on the critical study and production of a certain type or combination of media (print, photography, sound recording, cinema, video, television, and digital media); or they might focus on certain cultural, theoretical and/or social formations (for example, gender/sexuality in post-Cold war television, postcolonial theory and film, the changing form of the novel, theories of subjectivity and ideology, video games and theories of representation).

These paths are united by a commitment to critical thinking/practice: rather than reproducing conventions, MCM concentrators learn how conventions emerge, what work they do, and explore ways to change them.

Track I

Track I concentrators may choose to study a particular historical moment, a medium, or a mode of textual production, in combination with theoretical studies that examine the categories of cultural analysis: for example, the distinction between high and low culture. Examples of areas of interest include but are not limited to film, gender/sexuality, digital media, television, post-coloniality, the novel, modern thought, the modern arts, sound, and theories of ideology and subjectivity. Productive work in some modern medium or textual mode is encouraged for all concentrators. MCM’s approach to production recognizes the inextricable link between theory and practice, and the possibility of a fruitful complicity between practice and theory, and the possibility of a fruitful complicity between production: comparative analysis and theoretical reflection, as well as work that integrates practice and theory. We thus bring together aspects of modern culture that are normally separated by departmental structures such as film and media studies, fine art, literature, literary arts and philosophy. This concentration offers the student a range of possible specializations. A student might decide to focus on the critical study and production of a certain type or combination of media (print, photography, sound recording, cinema, video, television, and digital media); or they might focus on certain cultural, theoretical and/or social formations (for example, gender/sexuality in post-Cold war television, postcolonial theory and film, the changing form of the novel, theories of subjectivity and ideology, video games and theories of representation).

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1. Focus Area: Of the 11 courses required for the concentration, at least 3 courses must be in a focus area approved by a concentration advisor. These courses may be MCM courses, related courses, or a combination of the two, and they must represent a focus on some aspect of modern literature, theory, media, art or culture. Examples of possible focus areas are: mass/popular culture, gender/sexuality, language/representation/subjectivity, narrative, digital media, film, modern thought, television, the modern arts, the novel, colonialism and post-colonialism. This is not an exhaustive list. Production courses may be in the focus area but must be in addition to the minimum 3 courses.

2. Production: Work in production is encouraged but not required for Track I concentrators. Of the 11 courses required for concentration, as many as 3 may be in production. These may be production courses offered by MCM (film, video, digital media) or courses in creative writing, painting, photography, journalism, etc., provided they do not bring the total number of concentration courses taken outside MCM to more than 3.

Honors:

The honors program in MCM is designed for students who wish to integrate their skills in a special project. Students who qualify for Honors in Track I are eligible to apply to do an Honors project or thesis. Students should submit a letter of interest in their 6th semester, and a formal proposal, by the first day of their 7th semester. Applications will be screened by the MCM Honors Committee. Application forms are available in the MCM office. If approved, a student must then register for MCM1970, a one credit course which can count towards their Focus Area requirements, and MCM1990, a one-credit thesis course in which they complete the Honors thesis.

Track II

Track II concentration combines production courses with the critical study of the cultural role of practice. It aims to engage students in the analysis of theories of production elaborated within philosophical, artistic, and technological traditions, while encouraging them to produce works that interrogate these traditions.

Track II consists of 11 courses:

Two core courses:

- MCM 0150 Text/Media/Culture: Theories of Modern Culture and Media

Select one of the following Introductory Practice or History of a Medium courses:

- MCM 0710 Introduction to Filmic Practice: Time and Form
- MCM 0730 Introduction to Video Production: Critical Strategies and Histories
- MCM 0750 Art in Digital Culture
- VISA 0100 Studio Foundation
- VISA 0110 Advanced Studio Foundation
- VISA 0120 Foundation Media: Sound and Image
- MUSC 0200 Computers and Music
- CSCI 0150 Introduction to Object-Oriented Programming and Computer Science
- A course from the LITR 0110 series
- A course from the LITR 0210 series
- HIAA 0010 A Global History of Art and Architecture
- TAPS 0030 Introduction to Acting and Directing
- MUSC 0010 Introduction to Western Music
- MUSC 0040 World Music Cultures (Africa, America, Europe, Oceania)

One additional course from the following:

- MCM 0220 Print Cultures: Textuality and the History of Books
- MCM 0230 Digital Media
- MCM 0240 Television Studies
- MCM 0250 Visuality and Visual Theories
- MUSC 0010 Introduction to Western Music
- MUSC 0040 World Music Cultures (Africa, America, Europe, Oceania)
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MCM 0260</td>
<td>Cinematic Coding and Narrativity</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>MCM 1110</td>
<td>The Theory of the Sign</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Three additional courses from the MCM 1200 or MCM 1500 series</td>
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<td>Four practice courses selected in consultation with an advisor</td>
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<td></td>
<td>One Senior Seminar from the MCM 1700 series or other equivalent in production</td>
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Total Credits: 11

1 At least one must be from the MCM 1500 series.
2 Courses can be in any medium or combinatory sequence of media from the following departments: Modern Culture and Media, Visual Art, Music, Literary Arts, Theatre Arts and Performance Studies, Computer Science, Engineering, supplemented by approved courses at Rhode Island School of Design and study abroad. This list is not exhaustive.

Honors:
The honors program in MCM is designed for students who wish to integrate their skills in a special project. Students who qualify for Honors in Track II are eligible to apply to do an Honors project or thesis. Students should submit a letter of interest in their 6th semester, and a formal proposal, by the first day of their 7th semester. Applications will be screened by the MCM Honors Committee. (Application forms are available in the MCM office.) If approved, a student must then register for MCM1970, a one credit course which can count towards their Focus Area requirements, and MCM1990, a one-credit thesis course in which they complete the Honors project/thesis.