

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.

Theory Based 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 them. Production, in the sense defined here, is a theoretically informed sphere or practice, one within which acknowledged forms of cultural creation are tested and extended in close complementarity with the analyses conducted elsewhere in MCM.

The Practice Based 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.

Theory Based

Theory Based consists of 11 courses.

Core courses

MCM 0150	Text/Media/Culture: Theories of Modern Culture and Media	1
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Select two of the following:¹ 2

MCM 0220	Print Cultures: Textuality and the History of Books	
MCM 0230	Digital Media	
MCM 0240	Television Studies	
MCM 0250	Visuality and Visual Theories	
MCM 0260	Cinematic Coding and Narrativity	
MCM 1110	The Theory of the Sign	

Additional courses 5

One must be an upper level course from the MCM 1200 series

Two must be senior seminars from the MCM 1500 or MCM 1700 series

Two must be at any level in MCM above MCM 0260

Three additional courses. These courses must be in MCM or in related departments.² 3

Total Credits 11

¹ No more than three courses from this list may count for concentration requirements.

² The specific courses must be approved by an MCM concentration advisor as part of a coherent program of study.

Other Requirements:

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 Theory Based 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.

Practice Based

Practice Based consists of 11 courses:

Two core courses:

MCM 0150	Text/Media/Culture: Theories of Modern Culture and Media	1
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Select one MCM Introductory Practice course (MCM0700 series). Introductory practice courses in other disciplines may fulfill this requirement and should be selected in consultation with the concentration advisor. Possible disciplines include Literary Arts, Music, Theatre Arts and Performance Studies, Visual Art.

MCM 0700A	Introduction to the Production Image	
MCM 0710A	Introduction to Filmic Practice: Time and Form	

MCM 0730A	Introduction to Video Production: Critical Strategies and Histories	
MCM 0750A	Art in Digital Culture	

One additional course from the following: 1

MCM 0220	Print Cultures: Textuality and the History of Books	
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MCM 0230	Digital Media	
MCM 0240	Television Studies	

MCM 0250	Visuality and Visual Theories	
MCM 0260	Cinematic Coding and Narrativity	

MCM 1110	The Theory of the Sign	
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Three additional courses from the MCM 1200 or MCM 1500 series 3

Four practice courses selected in consultation with an advisor. ² 4

One Senior Seminar from the MCM 1700 series or other equivalent in production 1

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.

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 the Theory Based track are eligible to apply to do an Honors project or thesis. Students should submit a letter of intent 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 MCM 1980 (taken in the 7th semester), a one-credit course which can count towards their Focus Area requirements, and MCM 1990 (taken in the 8th semester), a one-credit thesis course in which they complete the Honors project/thesis.