Graphic Design

Overview

The Masters of Graphic Design (MGD) program helps move the passionate student toward a deeper knowledge of graphic and experience design and purposeful, individually driven design practices. Inquiry into contemporary and emergent design issues prepares graduates of the program for leadership positions that both evolve the profession and advance the discipline. Successful completion of the MGD results in a terminal degree, equal to the MFA, and qualifies graduates to teach at the university level or to pursue a PhD in Design.

Faculty charge graduate students to closely examine the cultural and technological situatedness of graphic design and its products, and to seek understanding of the people who use and interact with the things that graphic designers make. Coursework acquaints students with relevant theories and design research methods that frame and ground the design of propositional visual communication systems.

Varied topics prompt students to explore contemporary design concerns: the cultural contexts of design, the influence and experiences of end users, the social and technological environments within which designed artifacts operate. Subtopics within these broad concerns allow faculty and students the opportunity to frame, research, and respond to current and future design challenges.

The MGD program is consistently recognized as one of the top NASAD accredited graduate graphic design programs in the country and one of the few with STEM Classification (CIP). The faculty is nationally and internationally recognized (see Faculty at a Glance). Alumni are designers in leading professional offices around the world, faculty members in colleges and universities throughout the US and Canada, and doctoral students in PhD programs worldwide.

Affordable NC State tuition usually makes the cost of attending NC State well below that of equivalent graduate institutions. For out-of-state students, North Carolina residency laws recognize graduate students as residents after their first year.

MGD II: Two-year Master of Graphic Design Program

The MGD II program targets applicants who have earned a BFA or equivalent in graphic design and are practiced in visual communication, user interaction design (UI), user experience design (UX) and/or related design fields.

Integrated graduate studios, seminars, and workshops expose students to histories, design-related theories, and research methods relevant to current and emerging practices. Students investigate questions individually and collaboratively around the design of communication and interaction in several ways: through making (visualizations, visual diagrams, and functioning prototypes, for instance); assigned and independent reading and research; discussion and critique; and writing. Students also enroll in at least one elective offered in the college, university, or our affiliate universities, Duke University and UNC, Chapel Hill.

Students create a body of work as they explore a research interest area within studio and seminar subtopics. The experience of creating this work, coupled with researching and writing, positions students to identify a design investigation in their final year, which culminates in the required Final Project. For this work, students comprehensively research an area of interest, design propositional artifacts (findings), document the research and findings in a written thesis, and present the project in a public forum.

MGD III: Three-year Master of Graphic Design Program

The MGD III program targets applicants who have some professional experience but who have not earned a first degree in graphic design or have earned a BA with a graphic design concentration. (Note that applicants aiming for a qualifying professional degree in graphic design should apply to the Bachelor of Graphic Design program.)

MGD III students enroll in two semesters of specialized and advanced undergraduate coursework prior to matriculating to the MGD II program. The curriculum includes two studio--based courses and at least two lecture/seminar courses. The 6 credit studios cover systems thinking in design for user experience, visual communication, and other professional graphic design topics while they prepare the student for graduate level inquiry. Additional three credit courses focus on subjects such as mobile interaction, typography, graphic design theory and history, coding and modeling for interface design.

Admissions Requirements

Applications for Priority Admission are due to the Graduate School by January 5. Applications are reviewed until all seats are filled. In addition to Graduate School requirements, the Department asks for department personal data forms, a written personal statement, and a website or accessible online PDF portfolio that demonstrates experience and skills in visual communication.

Degree Requirements

The MGD (II) degree requires successful completion of 48 total credits, however students typically take advantage of additional coursework during their time at NC State.

The core curriculum consists of a 9-credit studio and a 3-credit seminar -- either Design Methods, Design Frameworks, or Final Project Research -- in each of the first three semesters of study. Students are encouraged to augment their study during this time with 400 or 500 level design coursework that enhances skills and/or investigates topics of interest. For instance, the program offers seminars on Graphic Design Pedagogy, Design Discourse and Typography, and Special Topics in Social Innovation. Students are required to enroll in a 3-credit 400 or 500 level elective within another college at NC State or at nearby Duke University or UNC/Chapel Hill under NC State tuition. The fourth semester is devoted to the final project for 6 credits, under the supervision of three Graphic Design faculty members comprising each student’s graduate committee.

Degrees

- Graphic Design (MR) (http://catalog.ncsu.edu/graduate/design/graphic-design/graphic-design-mr/)

Faculty

Full Professors

Denise M. Crisp
Scott Townsend

Associate Professors
Helen Armstrong
Kermit L. Bailey
Russell Flinchum
Carolina Gill
Deborah K. Littlejohn

Emeritus Faculty
Meredith Joy Davis
Austin S. Lowrey
Martha Scotford