Communication Design

Christopher Schulte
Interim Director of the School of Art
Studio and Design Center
479-575-5202

Alison Place
Program Director of Graphic Design
116 Fine Arts Center
479-575-5202

Bree McMahon
Director of Graduate Studies
116 Fine Arts Center
479-575-5202

Email: bmcm@uark.edu

School of Art Website (https://fulbright.uark.edu/departments/art/graduate-program/master-of-design.php)

Degree Conferred:
M.Des. in Communication Design (CDESMDES)

Program Description: True to the mission and purpose of the state flagship institution, the Master of Design program prepares designers to build a better world through design that strengthens their community, the state of Arkansas, and beyond. Through applied and speculative studio projects, the two-year Master of Design in Communication Design prepares students for emerging roles the field can play in involving communities in participatory design processes that generate equitable and sustainable solutions to design problems. The curriculum also addresses a research-led professional context increasingly defined by information, product, and service ecologies in which digital technologies are primary means of delivery and venues for citizen and consumer experiences.

Requirements for M.Des. in Communication Design

The graduate degree consists of 60 credit hours within a two-year period. For those applicants who derive from interdisciplinary undergraduate degrees or require a foundational design education prior to entering the Master of Design's two-year sequence, a foundational year will be offered. This single-year non-degree status program enables instruction in the foundational tenets necessary to succeed within the subsequent M.Des. program.

Admission requirements: Admission to the program requires an undergraduate degree in graphic design or a related discipline, or the equivalent in relevant work experience. The application for admission is a two-step process and may require fees associated with its completion. Candidates must be successful in both processes to be admitted to the University of Arkansas and Graduate School, as well as the School of Art and M.Des. graduate program.

1. Apply to the Graduate School at application.uark.edu (https://application.uark.edu/).
2. In addition to the graduate school application, submit the following materials to the School of Art using SlideRoom, web-based system at uarkart.slideroom.com (https://uarkart.slideroom.com/#/Login):

   a. A brief statement describing why you are interested in the Master of Design degree.
   b. A one- to two-page autobiographical statement outlining your education, experiences, achievements, and goals for graduate study.
   c. Resumé/Curriculum Vitae
   d. A professional portfolio comprising 12 projects captured as digital images and uploaded as directed with appropriate attributions. Consideration should be given to high levels of detail, consistency, and a curated body of work representing your professional and/or research interests.
   The uploading of these assets must conform to outlined standards. Physical examples of work will not be accepted nor can a personal website substitute for this component of the application.
   e. A PDF of unofficial transcripts from all previous colleges and universities attended.
   f. Three Letters of Recommendation are required and your application is not considered complete until such are received. All individuals serving as a reference should be from representatives of higher education or professionals who are able to offer insight into the applicant's academic and research ability and potential at the graduate level.
   g. English Proficiency Test Scores (TOEFL, IELTS, or PTE), if necessary. (Refer to Graduate School and International Studies admissions for more information at international-admissions.uark.edu (https://international-admissions.uark.edu/).)

Application deadline is January 15 for Fall admission only. The application portal on Slideroom will close at midnight (Central time) on January 15. It is recommended that you submit your application at least two weeks prior to the deadline to allow your faculty recommenders time to upload their letters.

The Graduate Record Exam (GRE) is not required for applicants to the Master of Design program in the School of Art at the University of Arkansas.

Students who are accepted into the Foundational Year are also conditionally accepted into the M.Des. degree tract concurrently [Foundation Year 1 + M.Des. Year 1 + M.Des. Year 2 = 3 Total Years]. However, at the end of the Foundational Year, students must undergo an extensive academic, research, and grade review. Students whose performance does not meet the assessment criteria could be asked to leave prior to commencing the Master of Design first year. While years 1 and 2 of the M.Des. are funded through the endowment, the Foundational Year is not.

Program Requirements: The program requires 60 graduate credit hours from the following:

Graduate Studios (33 credit hours)

GDES 63006	Design and Communities	6
GDES 63406	Design and Culture	6
GDES 63106	Design and Technology	6
GDES 63606	Graduate Final Project Research	6
GDES 63909	Graduate Studio	9
Graduate Seminars (12 credit hours)		
GDES 53303	Design Research Methods	3
GDES 53003	Design Pedagogy and Leadership	3

GDES 53803	Design Writing and Dissemination	3
GDES 53903	Design Theory: Past, Present, and the Future	3
Graduate Special Topics		
GDES 63503	Special Topics in Communication Design (Must complete three times for 9 credit hours total)	9
Approved electives		**6**
Requires prior approval from the Graduate Program Director.		
Total Hours		**60**

Graduate Faculty

Chioffi, David Charles, M.A. (Wesleyan University), B.F.A. (The Rochester Institute of Technology), Professor, School of Art, 2013, 2019.

Hapgood, Thomas Layley, M.F.A., B.A. (University of Arizona), Associate Professor, School of Art, 2005, 2012.

Hernandez, Sarah, Ph.D., M.S. (University of California, Irvine), B.S. (University of Florida), Associate Professor, Department of Civil Engineering, 2015, 2021.

Lane, Marty Maxwell, M.G.D. (North Carolina State University), B.F.A. (University of Illinois at Chicago), Associate Professor, School of Art, 2014, 2019.

McMahon, Bree, M.A., B.A. (North Carolina State University), Assistant Professor, School of Art, 2018.

Place, Alison L., M.F.A (Miami University), Assistant Professor, School of Art, 2017.

Slone, Ryan B., B.F.A (University of Arkansas), Instructor, School of Art, 2001.

Courses

GDES 53003. Design Pedagogy and Leadership. 3 Hours.
Explores the history and application of pedagogy related to careers in academia and professional practice. Focuses on methodologies for teaching, assessment, and curriculum writing. (Typically offered: Fall and Spring)

GDES 53103. Interactive Language. 3 Hours.
Advanced course utilizing interactive languages to create responsive experiences for the web, touch screens. Exploration of the intersection of linear and non-linear design experiences in the application of motion to web. Graduate degree credit will not be given for both GDES 43103 and GDES 53103. (Typically offered: Spring)

GDES 53203. Technology in Context. 3 Hours.
Advanced course focusing on speculative explorations in the world of interaction design. Much of the work will be touch and gesture based and dealing with the built environment. Application of knowledge about proper workflow and execution in an advanced way. Graduate degree credit will not be given for both GDES 43203 and GDES 53203. Prerequisite: GDES 43003 and GDES 43103 or GDES 53103. (Typically offered: Fall)

GDES 53303. Design Research Methods. 3 Hours.
Examines research methods from other disciplines to apply those methods to contemporary design practice, focusing on the means of collecting information throughout the creative process, and incorporating the roles of visual research, including imaging, modeling, prototyping, and diagramming. (Typically offered: Fall and Spring)

GDES 53403. Identity Systems. 3 Hours.
Advanced identity design course emphasizing creating cohesive messaging systems that cover a wide range of media. Creation of identity systems that are based on research and appropriate to content, context and audience. Media may span environmental, motion, print, web and packaging. Graduate degree credit will not be given for both GDES 43403 and GDES 53403. Prerequisite: GDES 43003 and (GDES 43103 or GDES 53103). (Typically offered: Fall)

GDES 53503. Human-Centered Design. 3 Hours.
Research-based studio introducing design methods that focus on an audience centric process. Exposure to communication theory, modes of persuasion, sustainability, how to design for niche audiences. Graduate degree credit will not be given for both GDES 43503 and GDES 53503. Prerequisite: GDES 43003 and GDES 43103. (Typically offered: Fall)

GDES 53603. Design Co-op. 3 Hours.
Collaboration with an organization, or design firm, providing opportunity to address problems existing outside of the classroom with the focus shifting between design for good initiatives. Collaboration, research, problem seeking and solving will be addressed. Graduate degree credit will not be given for both GDES 43603 and GDES 53603. Prerequisite: GDES 53203, GDES 53403, and GDES 53503. (Typically offered: Fall and Spring)

GDES 53703. Typographic Systems III. 3 Hours.
Culminating typography course, exploration of typography at an advanced level through a variety of projects. Projects may range from type design to type in motion to complex publication design. Exhibition of the utmost professional ideation, process, execution and craft expected. Graduate degree credit will not be given for both GDES 43703 and GDES 53703. Prerequisite: GDES 53203, GDES 53403, and GDES 53503. (Typically offered: Spring)

GDES 53803. Design Writing and Dissemination. 3 Hours.
Explores diverse modes of writing in design, including reviews and the peer-review process, journal articles and abstracts, books, popular culture, grant and funding applications, thesis writing, and other mediums. (Typically offered: Fall and Spring)

GDES 53903. Design Theory: Past, Present, and the Future. 3 Hours.
Explores design theory that is both discipline-specific and interdisciplinary. Examines the application of theory and frameworks within the context of design, including the history of design theory as well as contemporary and future practices. (Typically offered: Fall and Spring)

GDES 5940V. Graphic Design Internship. 1-6 Hour.
Credit for practical experience gained through internship in graphic design. Report required form intern and field supervisor on progress and significant accomplishments. 3 credit hours per semester. Graduate degree credit will not be given for both GDES 4940V and GDES 5940V. Prerequisite: Any 4000 level GDES visual design course except GDES 43403. (Typically offered: Fall, Spring and Summer) May be repeated for up to 6 hours of degree credit.

GDES 63006. Design and Communities. 6 Hours.
Community-based design research focusing primarily on people and users, covering topics related to "wicked problems" and complexity in design that require a system-level approach. (Typically offered: Fall and Spring)

GDES 63106. Design and Technology. 6 Hours.
Explores emerging technologies through the lens of what is plausible, possible, and preferable in the future of design. Examines topics related to data, policy, and the future of making while also considering interdisciplinary approaches and potential design outcomes. (Typically offered: Fall and Spring)

GDES 6320V. Graduate Design. 1-6 Hour.
Individual problems in two and three dimensional design. Prerequisite: Graduate standing. (Typically offered: Fall and Spring) May be repeated for degree credit.

GDES 63406. Design and Culture. 6 Hours.
Examines the culture of the design discipline to further provoke the confines of the discipline, and understand the ways in which practitioners are accountable for design outcomes through interdisciplinary approaches. (Typically offered: Fall and Spring)

GDES 63503. Special Topics in Communication Design. 3 Hours.
Topics dealing with trends, movements, and new elements within the design field, such as entrepreneurship, diversity, sustainability, critical issues, and data. (Typically offered: Fall and Spring) May be repeated for up to 12 hours of degree credit.

GDES 63606. Graduate Final Project Research. 6 Hours.
Develops a written project proposal that demonstrates a viable project with a clear research direction. (Typically offered: Fall and Spring)

GDES 63909. Graduate Studio. 9 Hours.
Students will complete a final project that includes a designed system, written research paper, and public presentation. The final project should demonstrate the ability to tackle significant design and research challenges. (Typically offered: Fall and Spring)