

Oregon College of Art and Craft and Pacific Northwest College of Art

MFA APPLIED CRAFT AND DESIGN

Philosophical Description and Rationale

Oregon College of Art and Craft and Pacific Northwest College of Art have collaborated to offer a joint MFA program steeped in design theory, tangible aptitude, and creative expression. Celebrating process, grounded in hands-on making, and emphasizing entrepreneurship, this unique graduate program represents a fusion of design and craft traditions that offer students the opportunity to create original work with an applied purpose. The MFA in Applied Craft and Design has been developed specifically for students interested in investigating objects and actions that benefit directly from the capabilities of craft and design sensibilities.

Students will engage in a self-directed curriculum tailored to their individual interests and that will challenge them to bring to life the full strength of their ideas and skills. Students will acquire skills and knowledge through immersion in hands-on making, in-depth study of craft and design history and theory, and extensive critical dialogue.

Social and environmental responsibility are vital components of this Program. Students will be expected to create work and pursue research that directly addresses social and environmental issues. Through collaboration, students are encouraged to explore opportunities for cross-disciplinary exchange.

This MFA is intended for students from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds seeking to develop a creative practice that blends the knowledge and capabilities of designers and makers. It will appeal to students with a strong background as makers who desire external outlets for their work, including access to the design profession. It will also appeal to students whose undergraduate and professional design experience has not fully integrated an appreciation for the art of making into their practice. Upon successful completion of this degree, graduates will be prepared to pursue entrepreneurial ventures, careers in design, artistic practices, and other occupations that embrace creative problem solving, in addition to opportunities in higher education.

Areas of Study

Studio Practice (12-24 credits)

This Program emphasizes an approach to design rooted in a fundamental understanding of and commitment to the process of making. Students engage in either a 3-6 credit studio each semester, depending on the extent to which the student wants to augment the studio experience with related electives. A central and unique feature of the studio experience is the one-on-one supervision provided by a faculty mentor selected by the student and Program Chair. (More on mentors on page 3.)

Practicum (6-12 credits)

The Practicum provides students with the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills towards a tangible outcome. Students will pursue rigorous methods of applied research to identify a specific issue to address, become familiar with strategies to engage community, and develop an understanding of the practical issues of sustainability. Interacting with stakeholders in a community concerned with the issue the student has identified to address, students will learn effective techniques to realize ideas and test theories. (More on Practicum on page 3.)

Critique Seminar (12 credits)

Through Seminar, students engage in thorough, critical analysis of their work and their process, benefiting from in-depth exposure to the wide variety of disciplines represented in the program. This course, led by the Program Chair, includes group critiques, studio and design firm visits, and one-on-one dialogue with prominent visiting artists and instructors. Emphasis will be placed on investigating and cultivating the synergistic relationship between the act of making and the creative process. Critiques will also address the social and environmental implications of students' work.

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Entrepreneurial Studies (6-12 credits)

Courses in Entrepreneurial Studies focus on creative business principles and strategies, and offer students the option to pursue internships (not required) to augment their classroom experience. In the first year, students will become familiar with aspects of professional practice such as contracts, intellectual property, business plans, promotion, client development, grant-writing, social entrepreneurship, and collaborative practices, etc. In the second year, students may choose to develop a greater understanding of creative business practices by participating in an internship.

Critical Studies (12 credits)

Courses in Critical Studies provide students with a comprehensive understanding of contemporary craft and design history and theory. In the first year, students take courses in the history of craft and design. In the second, students choose from a variety of courses that focus on particular issues in contemporary craft and design practice, such as aesthetics, sustainability, and globalization.

Electives (0-6 credits)

Elective courses allow students to hone techniques in making, expand upon their projects in Studio Practice or Practicum, or further pursue courses in history, theory, and criticism. Students can choose from existing upper-level studio and academic courses at both OCAC and PNCA.

Audit

As another resource for research, students will be allowed, under the direction of their mentor and the approval of the Program Chair, to audit any relevant course that is offered at OCAC or PNCA.

Curriculum Outline

Studio Practice and Critique Seminar	24-36 credits	40-60%
Entrepreneurial Studies and Practicum	12-18 credits	20-30%
Critical Studies	12 credits	20%
Electives	0-6 credits	10%
TOTAL:	60 credits	100%

	Year One	Year Two		
Fall Semester	Studio Practice	3-6 credits	Studio Practice	3-6 credits
	Critique Seminar	3 credits	Critique Seminar	3 credits
	Elective	0-3 credits	Elective	0-3 credits
	Entrepreneurial Studies: Professional Practice	3 credits	Entrepreneurial Studies: Internship	0-3 credits
	Critical Studies: History and Theory	3 credits	Critical Studies: Issues in Contemporary Practice	3 credits
	Practicum		Practicum	3-6 credits
Spring Semester	Studio Practice	3-6 credits	Studio Practice	3-6 credits
	Critique Seminar	3 credits	Critique Seminar	3 credits
	Elective	0-3 credits	Elective	0-3 credits
	Entrepreneurial Studies: Professional Practice	3 credits	Entrepreneurial Studies: Internship	0-3 credits
	Critical Studies: History and Theory	3 credits	Critical Studies: Issues in Contemporary Practice	3 credits
	Practicum		Practicum	3-6 credits

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Role of Mentors

The mentor-student relationship is personal and unique, and is at the heart of the MFA in Applied Craft and Design Program. The role of the mentor requires more than imparting information; the mentor also acts as an advocate, critic and colleague for the MFA student. The mentor provides a knowledgeable resource and supportive environment for the student to pursue self-designed, independent investigation and experimentation. The mentor meets with the student for approximately 1.5 hours per week, guiding the student in his/her explorations, discussing the student's goals as an artist or designer, and fostering an awareness of social, environmental and ethical concerns and responsibilities in the student's creative practice.

Mentors will be selected from OCAC and PNCA faculty in addition to professional artists, designers, and makers who have agreed to participate in the mentorship program. The Program will connect the student with a mentor whose expertise is directly relevant to the student's focus. The Program Chair will assess the qualifications and oversee the selection of mentors.

Practicum

A critical step in completing requirements for the Master of Applied Craft and Design is to undertake a Practicum, an exercise in the practical application of knowledge or skill through an independent project on an approved topic. The Practicum is similar to a Thesis, but emphasizes practical application of knowledge or skill in a new way. In this Program, the Practicum is intended to be an externalized expression of the intentions behind the work produced in Studio Practice, and requires a capstone paper. The type of projects students may pursue for the Practicum can range widely from creating built work to designing educational experiences to forming collaborative organizations. The main thrust of the Practicum is to produce a tangible outcome through engagement with a specific community, with an emphasis on addressing social and environmental concerns.

Students will prepare and present reports of their progress to their committee at preliminary and intermediate stages of completion. The Practicum culminates in a formal public presentation at the end of the second year.

Visiting Artists

The Program will sponsor a visiting artist lecture and workshop series featuring a wide variety of prominent, contemporary practitioners and theorists exploring the intersection of design and craft. Students will have direct access to engage in critical dialogue with visiting artists, and participate in workshops in which students will become familiar with the particular skills and techniques associated with making the artists work.

Students will also benefit from exposure to the many other visiting artists hosted by other programs at OCAC and PNCA. The collaborative origins and intentions of the Program present opportunities for students to interact with artists at the Museum of Contemporary Craft, the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art, as well as other institutions and creative businesses in Portland.

Facilities

Students will have access to the facilities and courses at both OCAC, situated high in the serene west hills of Portland, and PNCA, located in the Pearl District downtown. The Program studios will be housed in the Pearl District, in a warehouse building with studio space of approximately 4500-square feet for each class of 15 students. Each student will be provided with private studio space, as well as professional level exhibition spaces on both campuses to display their work and to learn preparatory and installation skills.

Students will have access to all labs, shops, libraries and equipment at both campuses. Labs are staffed by highly-qualified technicians able to provide students with technical assistance and instruction. There are seven different digital computer labs and professional-level color, large-format printing capabilities on Epson 9600 printers, (dispensing 100-year archival ink for use on fabric, photo negative film or other experimental materials). Students will also have access to dedicated labs and shops with specialized equipment for Book Arts, Printmaking, Ceramics, Design, Fibers, Metals, Photography, and Wood.