Digital Media Studies M.A.

The Master of Arts in Digital Media Studies is designed to provide students with the necessary tools and skills to thrive as creative professionals in the ever-evolving industry of digital media production. The degree responds to a cultural shift toward media convergence and emphasizes the importance of adaptability and embracing constant change and innovation. It combines strategic communication and business skills with production and design competence in the areas of photography, video, graphic design, gaming and software programming.

The program rests profoundly on three pillars:

• Creation and completion of hands-on industry-standard digital media projects;
• Extensive training in relevant and industry-standard communication skills, both written and spoken;
• Strong focus on conceptual and analytical skills, both visual and text-based, as well as technical.

The degree also emphasizes teamwork and network building. Students will not only graduate with an industry-relevant production portfolio, but also with the network in place to launch a successful career in the field.

The Digital Media Studies degree requires 36 hours of study. Students are required to take nine hours of core courses, six hours of courses in theoretical foundations and 12 hours of Practical Applications in design and production. Students then select three additional hours in the area that most interests them. The course work is followed by a six-hour capstone experience in the form of a master's project, master's thesis, graduate internship, or comprehensive examination. Students are required to make a "B-" or better in all courses counting toward the degree and maintain a 3.00 or better GPA.

Admission

Students must have a GPA of 3.00 or better or have met the HSH admission GRE requirement to be accepted into the program. To be considered, students need to submit a production portfolio accompanied by a Statement of Purpose. The portfolio (for guidelines see below) should demonstrate significant experience in the field. The Statement of Purpose should clearly define the student's goal with this degree and outline how the degree builds on their previous experience and education in the field. If the selection committee deems the student's experience and skills in the field as not sufficient, students may be provisionally accepted into the program, but will need to complete especially recommended preparation courses within the first two semesters or they will not be counted toward the DMST degree. Students may take the core classes (listed below) in conjunction with these recommended preparatory prerequisites, but may not progress to further coursework until these prerequisites are completed.

Portfolio Guidelines

All portfolio pieces have to be accessible online. We do not accept physical objects such as slides or CDs. If passwords are necessary to access the pieces, it is the student's responsibility to communicate them. The committee will not
reach out if pieces are not readily accessible. No more than 20 individual pieces should be submitted. The applicant must make clear his or her involvement in the production of the piece. Examples for successful portfolio pieces are written strategic or creative writing materials, graphic design examples, a 15-minute short film or documentary, a series of digitally prepared photographs with a theme, a website, an app or a game. The most important function of the portfolio is to convince the selection committee, that what has been outlined in the Statement of Purpose can be achieved by the student based on existing experience and skills.

Applications are accepted for review twice a year, from January 15 – April 15 and from August 15 – October 31. Admission decisions for fall are usually made by the end of April and for spring by the end of November.

Equipment and Software
The university provides on-campus labs equipped with computers and the software needed for coursework. Students who wish to work from home may need to purchase equipment and software. A DSLR camera and a computer are highly recommended for students concentrating in Production Design.

Degree Requirements

### Core Curriculum (9 hours)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DMST 5230</td>
<td>Critical Approaches to Digital Media</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMST 5232</td>
<td>Media and Communication Research Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
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Must be taken in the first year.

### Theoretical Foundations (6 hours)

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Credit Hours</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DMST 5034</td>
<td>Global Issues in a Digital Society</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMST 5311</td>
<td>Game Design and Theory</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMST 5233</td>
<td>Digital Media Law and Ethics Seminar</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMST 5234</td>
<td>Public Relations Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMST 5333</td>
<td>Social Media</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMST 5437</td>
<td>Digital Media and Society</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMST 5931</td>
<td>Research Topics in Digital Media Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
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DMST adviser permission required for DMST 5931.

### Practical Applications (12 hours)

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Credit Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DMST 5033</td>
<td>Advertising Design</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMST 5039</td>
<td>Web Development</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMST 5322</td>
<td>3D Modeling</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMST 5235</td>
<td>Animation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMST 5330</td>
<td>Strategic Campaign Planning</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMST 5332</td>
<td>Motion Graphics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMST 5436</td>
<td>Interactive Animation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMST 5534</td>
<td>Video Production 1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMST 5535</td>
<td>Narrative Video Production</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMST 5536</td>
<td>Studio-Based Video Production</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMST 5537</td>
<td>Documentary Video Production</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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DMST adviser permission required for DMST 5931 and/or COMM 4391.
DMST 5538 | Electronic Publishing  
Credit Hours: 3

DMST 5931 | Research Topics in Digital Media Studies  
Credit Hours: 3

COMM 4391 | Selected Topics in Communication  
Credit Hours: 3

**Elective (3 hours)**

Select ONE additional course from the list below or from the Theoretical Foundations and Practical Applications areas.

- MGMT 5638 | Leading Technology  
Credit Hours: 3

- ISAM 5030 | Fundamentals of Business Programming Applications  
Credit Hours: 3

- PSYC 6431 | User-Centered Design  
Credit Hours: 3

**Capstone Experience (6 hours)**

- DMST 6839 | Master’s Project Research  
Credit Hours: 3

- DMST 6939 | Master’s Thesis  
Credit Hours: 3

- DMST 6739 | Graduate Internship  
Credit Hours: 3

- DMST 6909 | Master’s Exam Option  
Credit Hours: 0

**Program Summary**

Core Curriculum: 9 hours

Theoretical Foundations: 6 hours

Practical Applications: 12 hours

Elective: 3 hours

Capstone Experience: 6 hours

Total: 36 hours

**Notes:**

Based on student demand and industry trends & innovations new courses are introduced under the DMST 5931: Research Topics rubric on a regular basis. If a scheduled course is not listed in the curriculum, consult with your adviser to determine whether it falls under the theory, design or production area. Students are also allowed up to a total of two Independent Studies courses in the Practical Applications and / or the Electives sections with instructor consent. In these classes students work on a one on one basis with a faculty member of their choice to create projects specifically designed to match their interests and skill levels. These classes allow students to go far beyond the skill levels and expectations of the other classes offered and may be used to create a highly competitive skillset in a specific subsection of Digital Media Creation.

No more than six hours of undergraduate coursework may apply toward the DMST degree.

Students who have earned an undergraduate degree from UHCL will not be able to take cross-listed courses in the curriculum for master's level credit that they took for undergraduate credit.

**Career paths in public relations:**

Public relations is a flourishing industry with a predicted growth of the workforce of 10% in the next five years. Career paths in public relations range between working for a multinational corporation to working for large public relations agency or small boutique public relations firm. Government agencies and nonprofits are also prominent employers of PR practitioners. Other
job opportunities in public relations include gathering facts and data to keep track of public concerns and current trends affecting publics and corporations, creating promotional events to gain awareness and support of a specific products or client, and collecting data for news releases to promote awareness.

Career Opportunities in production & design:
Career opportunities in the digital media production industry include employment for TV stations, film production companies, post–production houses and the media or PR departments of large national and multinational companies. Due to the increased affordability of the production tools, there is also a constantly growing and evolving freelance market for digital media production specialists. Freelance opportunities include event videographers and photographers, photography, video or audio editing specialists and independent game or app designers, to mention just a few. The greater Houston area has a very vibrant digital media production industry with good employment opportunities in all of the above fields.