VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS, MFA

Banner Code: AR-MFA-VPA

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The MFA in Visual and Performing Arts is a terminal degree which prepares students as professional artists and scholars who can work within their specialty and teach at the university level. Creative work and skill building are at the core of the study. The curriculum is designed for serious and talented students who are prepared to examine modes of creative inquiry in an inclusive, unique environment that promotes exploration, analysis, synthesis, and development as artists.

Admissions & Policies

Admissions

Concentration in Dance
The MFA in Visual and Performing Arts, concentration in Dance, is a highly selective 60-credit program of study grounded in the modern dance genre that emphasizes mastery in performance, choreography, and teaching in higher education. Applicants must have significant (5 years or more) professional performance experience in modern or ballet at the national or international level. They must also demonstrate professional competence in choreography as exemplified by a significant body of work, and have experience teaching technique at the advanced level.

All MFA applicants are required to submit the following items:

• Online Application and Fee
• Official transcripts from each institution of higher education attended
• 3 letters of recommendation
• Resume
• Goals Statement

The following should be sent directly to the School of Dance via SlideRoom:

• 15-minute video of original choreography
• Artistic Goals Statement
• Resume
• Applicant must satisfy the following prerequisites: advanced dance technique, improvisation, dance composition, history, anatomy/kinesiology, and dance production. Prerequisite courses are usually fulfilled if the applicant has earned a BA or BFA in Dance.

Qualified students will be invited for an audition after review of application materials.

Concentration in Graphic Design
All MFA applicants are required to submit the following items:

• Online Application and Fee

Additional requirements for concentration in Graphic Design:

• Portfolio
• Writing Sample: A critical and historical essay or academic paper on a design- (preferred) or art-related topic.

Portfolio Guidelines
The applicant’s portfolio is a major selection criterion for graduate admission and should represent the applicant’s most accomplished work.

The portfolio and all other application materials should be submitted to the Office of Graduate Admissions. For more information, contact the School of Art office at 703-993-8898.

Portfolios should include 20 samples of design work submitted through SlideRoom. Samples must be labeled with: name of artist, title, and date. Videos and Flash files (no more than 4 minutes for each section) must be playable through SlideRoom. In the case of collaborative work, the applicant’s role should be clearly stated.

Concentration in Theater
Theater MFA students are admitted to a specific emphasis: acting, design & technology, directing, musical theater, or playwriting & dramaturgy. Specific programs of study will be designed for each individual, based on previous experience and expertise.

Admissions Requirements
All MFA applicants are required to submit the following items:

• Online Application and Fee
• Official transcripts from each institution of higher education attended
• 3 letters of recommendation
• Resume
• Goals Statement

Additional requirements for concentration in Theater:

• Portfolio
• Interview or Audition

Diversity among students accepted for study is another consideration. Applicants with degrees in areas other than Theater are welcome, although they may be required to complete undergraduate endorsement core courses. Details available on School of Theater website.

Portfolio Guidelines
The applicant’s portfolio is a major selection criterion for graduate admission and should represent the applicant’s most accomplished work. The portfolio and all other application materials should be submitted to the Office of Graduate Admissions. For more information, contact the School of Theater office at 703-993-1120.

Portfolio requirements are different for each graduate area of emphasis and are listed below. Incomplete portfolios will not be considered. Applicants’ portfolio items are considered part of the application for
admission and, thus, cannot be returned. Please do not send original materials.

**Portfolio Requirements by Area of Emphasis**

**Design & Technology**
One fully documented design in your area of emphasis (i.e. lighting, sound, scenery, costume, etc.). This may include: script analysis, research, renderings, paperwork, drafting, diagrams, sound clips and photographs of the production. Additional examples of design work and artistic vision may also be submitted. Guidelines available on School of Theater website.

**Playwriting & Dramaturgy**
One to three writing samples, totaling no more than 25 pages. Playwrights should submit a one-page synopsis and dialogue sample. Dramaturgs may submit essays, reviews, or articles written for the general public, along with a cover letter addressing key areas of interest in the field. Guidelines available on School of Theater website.

**Acting and Music Theater Performance**
A three page written character analysis of one of the roles to be presented at auditions. Guidelines available on School of Theater website. Please see audition requirements.

**Audition Requirements**

**Acting**
Applicants for the MFA with an emphasis in Acting must complete an audition for the program. Applicants should be prepared with three contrasting monologues. Two monologues will be required for the audition, and a third may be requested should additional material be needed. Please prepare both classical and contemporary work. Auditors will be looking for range, transformational potential, and vocal and physical expressiveness.

**Musical Theater**
Applicants for the MFA with an emphasis in Musical Theater must complete an audition for the program. Applicants should be prepared with two songs and two monologues. Contrast between the pieces is essential. Please prepare both classical and contemporary work. Auditors will be looking for musical ability, range, transformational potential, vocal and physical expressiveness, dance and movement skills, and emotional honesty through text and song. An accompanist may be provided and requires a cash fee on the day of audition. This includes a brief rehearsal prior to appointment time. Those auditioning may provide their own accompanist.

**Concentration in Visual Art**
All MFA applicants are required to submit the following items:

- Online Application and Fee
- Official transcripts from each institution of higher education attended
- 3 letters of recommendation
- Resume
- Goals Statement

Additional Requirements for Concentration in Visual Arts:

- Portfolio

**Portfolio Guidelines**
The applicant’s portfolio is a major selection criterion for graduate admission and should represent the applicant’s most accomplished work.

The portfolio and all other application materials should be submitted to the Office of Graduate Admissions. For more information, contact the School of Art office at 703-993-8898. Portfolio requirements are different for each graduate area of emphasis and are listed below. Incomplete portfolios will not be considered.

**Portfolio Requirements by Area of Emphasis**

**InterArts**
20 images submitted through SlideRoom. Samples must be labeled with: name of artist, title and date. Videos and Flash files (no more than four minutes for each section) must be playable through SlideRoom. In the case of collaborative work, the applicant’s role should be clearly stated. If writing-based materials are submitted, they should be submitted in printed form.

**New Media Arts**
20 images submitted through SlideRoom. Samples must be labeled with: name of artist, title and date. Videos and Flash files (no more than four minutes for each section) must be playable through SlideRoom. Only the relevant parts of the video should be marked for viewing, with the applicant’s role clearly stated.

**Painting and Drawing**
20 images submitted through SlideRoom. Samples must be labeled with: name of artist, title and date.

**Photography**
20 images submitted through SlideRoom. Samples must be labeled with: name of artist, title and date.

**Printmaking**
20 images submitted through SlideRoom. Samples must be labeled with: name of artist, title and date.

**Sculpture**
20 images submitted through SlideRoom. Samples must be labeled with: name of artist, title and date.

**Policies**

**Program Requirements**
Candidates are required to complete 60 credits, of which 30 are made up from core requirements. An additional 30 credits are based on concentration area and comprehensive experience.

MFA concentrations include:

- Dance
- Graphic Design
- Theater
- Visual Art

While the faculty anticipate that students will work through their coursework as described in this catalog, individuals with extensive professional accomplishment may craft an individualized program that meets curricular requirements. Individualized programs require
the recommendation of the Graduate Committee within the student’s respective school as well as the approval of the CVPA Associate Dean.

Requirements

Degree Requirements

Total credits: 60

Students should complete all requirements within the concentration to which they have been admitted. Candidates are required to complete 60 credits, of which 30 are made up from core requirements. An additional 30 credits are based on concentration area and comprehensive experience.

Concentration in Dance (DANC)

The MFA in Visual and Performing Arts, concentration in Dance, is a highly selective 60-credit program of study grounded in the modern dance genre that emphasizes mastery in performance, choreography, and teaching in higher education.

Core Degree Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Method</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Seminar</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Seminar</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Aesthetics</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Studies in History/Theory/Contemporary Trend</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DANC 598 Philosophy and Aesthetics of Dance</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DANC 615 Contemporary Trends</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Practicum</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DANC 627 Advanced Teaching Seminar</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Directed Reading</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AVT 796 Directed Reading</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DANC 798 Directed Choreography/Project</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thesis</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DANC 799 Thesis</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Credits: 30

Concentration Requirements

| DANC 510 Contemporary Movement Theories | 3 |
| DANC 550 Advanced Choreography | 3 |
| DANC 570 Advanced Dance Performance | 3 |
| DANC 571 Residency Workshop | 3 |
| DANC 790 Internship | 3 |
| DANC 672 Dance Production | 3 |

Select 12 credits from the following:

| DANC 525 Advanced Modern Dance (must be taken for a minimum 6 credits) |
| DANC 545 Advanced Ballet (must be taken for a minimum 3 credits) |

Total Credits: 30

Concentration in Graphic Design (GD)

The MFA in Visual and Performing Arts, concentration in Graphic Design offers students a comprehensive study and preparation for the graphic design profession. The program includes courses in typography, web design, image making, and brand design, as well as prepares students for an academic career in Graphic Design. The broad range of study is intended to develop professionals prepared for an ever-expanding graphic design field.

Core Degree Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Methods</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four credits of AVT 519 Special Topics in Graphic Design</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate Seminar</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Five credits of AVT 611 Graduate Design Seminar</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Seminar</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AVT 617 Advanced Typography</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advanced Aesthetics</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AVT 613 Experiential Design History</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Studies in History/Theory/Contemporary Trend</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AVT 618 Visual Communication Theories</td>
<td>2</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Practicum</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two credits of AVT 670 Teaching Practicum</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Directed Reading</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AVT 796 Directed Reading</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Six credits of AVT 798 Directed Project and Exhibition (6 credits)</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thesis</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three credits of AVT 799 Thesis</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Credits: 30

1. Involves a study of the historical basis for a studio project; an independent creative production suitable for public viewing; and a written thesis documenting the evolution of the creative problem and exploring the intention, purpose, and relative success of the finished project.

Concentration Requirements

Select 10 - 14 credits from the following:

| AVT 519 Special Topics in Graphic Design |
| AVT 614 Brand Identity Design |
| AVT 619 Advanced Web Design |

Select 0 - 4 credits from the following:

| AVT 596 Independent Study |
### Visual and Performing Arts, MFA

**AVT 599**  Special Topics in Art and Visual Technology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AVT 641</td>
<td>Graduate Graphic Design I</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVT 646</td>
<td>Graduate Graphic Design II</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVT 647</td>
<td>Advanced Graduate Graphic Design I</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVT 648</td>
<td>Advanced Graphic Design II</td>
<td>4</td>
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</table>

**Total Credits**: 30

### Concentration in Theater (THR)

The MFA in Visual and Performing Arts, concentration in Theater, is a terminal degree that prepares students to become professional artists, work in theater or arts-related fields, and teach at the university level.

#### Core Degree Requirements

**Research Methods**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AVT 600</td>
<td>Research Methodologies</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Graduate Seminar**

Two credits of

- THR 591  Graduate Seminar  2

**Writing Seminar**

THR 652  Writing Seminar  3

**Advanced Aesthetics**

AVT 621  Art Writing Seminar  3

**Studies in History/Theory/Contemporary Trend**

Six credits of

- THR 651  Advanced Dramatic Theory and Criticism  3

**Teaching Practicum**

THR 655  Teaching Practicum  3

**Directed Reading**

THR 796  Directed Reading  1

**Project**

THR 797  Project Preparation  6

& THR 798  and Project Practicum  3

**Thesis**

THR 799  Thesis (3 credits)  3

**Total Credits**: 30

### Concentration Requirements for All Emphases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THR 539</td>
<td>Aesthetics for the Theater</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THR 551</td>
<td>Advanced Theater Pedagogy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THR 560</td>
<td>Advanced Script Analysis</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THR 691</td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THR 790</td>
<td>Directed Research</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Credits**: 12

### Track Requirements

In each area of emphasis, students must pick either a professional or academic track. Students in the professional track will complete at least three additional credits in practical production experience over and above the core in the following:

Select 3 credits from the following:

- THR 694  Graduate Field Experience  3
- THR 696  Advanced Acting Practicum  3

**Total Credits**: 3

Students in the academic track will complete at least three additional credits in practical teaching over and above the core in the following:

Select 15 credits from the following:

**Acting Emphasis**:

- THR 525  Advanced Musical Theater Workshop  3
- THR 590  Special Topics for Graduate Study  3
- THR 599  Independent Study  3
- THR 610  Acting Mentorship  3
- THR 620  Acting Techniques  3
- THR 694  Graduate Field Experience  3
- THR 696  Advanced Acting Practicum  3

**Design & Technology Emphasis**:

- THR 530  Topics in Theater Design  3
- THR 590  Special Topics for Graduate Study  3
- THR 599  Independent Study  3
- THR 630  Design Mentorship  3
- THR 694  Graduate Field Experience  3
- THR 699  Advanced Design Practicum  3
- AMGT 602  Seminar in Arts Management  3
- AMGT 609  Performing Arts Management  3
- AMGT 706  Festivals and Special Events  3
- AMGT 752  Arts Entrepreneurship  3
- GAME 635  Issues in Interactive Entertainment  3
- GAME 650  Advanced Music and Sound for Games  3
- AVT 682  Experimental 2D Animation  3
- AVT 686  Experimental 3D Animation  3
- AVT 687  Advanced Topics: New Media  3
- AVT 688  Hybrid Animation  3
- FAVS 565  Documentary Filmmaking  3
- FAVS 575  Fiction Film Directing  3
- FAVS 599  Special Topics  3

**Directing Emphasis**:

- THR 540  Directing Techniques  3
- THR 590  Special Topics for Graduate Study  3
- THR 599  Independent Study  3
- THR 640  Directing Mentorship  3
- THR 694  Graduate Field Experience  3
- THR 698  Advanced Directing Practicum  3
- THR 755  Academic Track Practicum  3
- FAVS 565  Documentary Filmmaking  3
FAVS 575  Fiction Film Directing
FAVS 599  Special Topics

**Musical Theater Emphasis:**
THR 525  Advanced Musical Theater Workshop
THR 590  Special Topics for Graduate Study
THR 599  Independent Study
THR 610  Acting Mentorship
THR 620  Acting Techniques
THR 694  Graduate Field Experience
THR 696  Advanced Acting Practicum
THR 755  Academic Track Practicum
MUSI 621  Graduate Applied Music
MUSI 688  Opera and Musical Theater Ensemble
MUSI 699  Independent Study

**Playwriting & Dramaturgy Emphasis:**
THR 571  Advanced Playwriting Workshop
THR 590  Special Topics for Graduate Study
THR 599  Independent Study
THR 694  Graduate Field Experience
THR 697  Advanced Playwriting and Dramaturgy Practicum
THR 740  Directors and Dramaturg in Collaboration

**Total Credits** 15

**Concentration in Visual Art (VART)**
The MFA in Visual and Performing Arts, concentration in Visual Arts, is a terminal degree that prepares students to become professional artists, work in technology or arts-related fields, and teach at the university level. Students select an emphasis in one of the following: New Media, Painting and Drawing, Photography, Printmaking, Sculpture, or InterArts. Students have the opportunity to combine art forms in projects that may be installation, performance, publishing, time-based, or writing-based, and combine creative and critical approaches in their work.

**Core Requirements**

**Research Methods**

**Graduate Seminar**
Six credits of
AVT 610  Graduate Seminar

**Writing Seminar**
AVT 621  Art Writing Seminar

**Advanced Aesthetics**
AVT 507  Advanced Aesthetics
or AVT 599  Special Topics in Art and Visual Technology

**Studies in History/Theory/Contemporary Trend**
AVT 620  Theory, Criticism, and the Arts

**Teaching Practicum**
Two credits of
AVT 670  Teaching Practicum

**Directed Reading**
AVT 796  Directed Reading

**Project**
Six credits of

**AVT 798  Directed Project and Exhibition**

**Thesis**
Three credits of
AVT 799  Thesis

**Total Credits** 30

**Note:**
AVT 796 Directed Reading/AVT 798 Directed Project and Exhibition/AVT 799 Thesis involves a study of the historical basis for a studio project; an independent creative production suitable for public viewing; and a written thesis documenting the evolution of the creative problem and exploring the intention, purpose, and relative success of the finished project.

**Concentration Requirements**
Select 8 credits from the following:

**AVT 596  Independent Study**
AVT 599  Special Topics in Art and Visual Technology
Other courses as approved by director

**Four credits of**

**AVT 599  Special Topics in Art and Visual Technology**

**AVT 610  Graduate Seminar**

**AVT Emphasis Courses**
16

**Total Credits** 30

**Areas of Emphasis**

**InterArts**
Select 16 credits of any 500 - 600 level AVT course as approved by the division director. InterArts graduate students may combine courses from studio areas of emphasis (as indicated below) and work with faculty to design an interdisciplinary thesis project.

**Total Credits** 16

**New Media Art**
Select four from the following courses:

**AVT 616  Advanced Art and Interactivity**
**AVT 676  Graduate Sound Art**
**AVT 682  Experimental 2D Animation**
**AVT 684  Advanced Image Making**
**AVT 685  Video Art**
**AVT 686  Experimental 3D Animation**
**AVT 687  Advanced Topics: New Media**
**AVT 688  Hybrid Animation**

**Total Credits** 16

**Painting and Drawing**
Select four courses from the following:

**AVT 522  Drawing V**
**AVT 523  Drawing VI**
**AVT 599  Special Topics in Art and Visual Technology (Must be approved by advisor)**

**AVT 622  Advanced Drawing**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AVT 632</td>
<td>Graduate Painting I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVT 633</td>
<td>Graduate Painting II</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>AVT 634</td>
<td>Advanced Graduate Painting I</td>
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<tr>
<td>AVT 635</td>
<td>Advanced Graduate Painting II</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Total Credits</strong></td>
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**Photography**

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<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AVT 652</td>
<td>Graduate Photography I</td>
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<tr>
<td>AVT 653</td>
<td>Graduate Photography II</td>
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<tr>
<td>AVT 654</td>
<td>Advanced Graduate Photography I</td>
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<tr>
<td>AVT 655</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Total Credits</strong></td>
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**Printmaking**

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<td>AVT 642</td>
<td>Graduate Printmaking I</td>
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<tr>
<td>AVT 643</td>
<td>Graduate Printmaking II</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVT 644</td>
<td>Advanced Graduate Printmaking I</td>
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<tr>
<td>AVT 645</td>
<td>Advanced Graduate Printmaking II</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Total Credits</strong></td>
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**Sculpture**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AVT 662</td>
<td>Graduate Sculpture I</td>
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<tr>
<td>AVT 663</td>
<td>Graduate Sculpture II</td>
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<tr>
<td>AVT 664</td>
<td>Advanced Graduate Sculpture I</td>
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<tr>
<td>AVT 665</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Total Credits</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
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Note:

Mason does not guarantee the availability of these courses every semester; some are offered in alternate years.