

New Media Student Handbook, Part I

Before You Get Here – New Media Student Information

Updated 2017

University of
Lethbridge



Faculty of Fine Arts
Department of New Media

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Welcome to New Media... we are confident you'll have a valuable and rewarding university experience and are pleased to have you join our community.

1. BFA New Media

1.1 Program Description

The Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) New Media degree program combines:

- creativity
- aesthetics
- critical analysis
- media studies and
- technical expertise

The program's unique combination of fine arts courses, digital technology, and liberal arts electives is a response to the demands of two interwoven areas:

- **the new media industry** whose hiring focus has shifted from a primarily technical workforce to a more artistically developed, diverse talent pool
- **New Media as a scholarly and artistic field** dedicated to the intellectual and creative exploration and application of emergent media technologies

During their studies, students encounter instruction in a variety of areas including:

- 3D art
- animation
- gaming design
- graphic design
- interaction design
- new media theory and history
- video, cinema and the moving image
- web design

1.2 Department History

The Department (originally known as Multimedia) was founded in 1999 by the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Lethbridge with support of the Province of Alberta's Access program funding. Twenty-five students enrolled in the founding class and now there are about 250 students enrolled, with many of the program's graduates working in media-related fields across Canada and the globe. In the fall 2003, the Department of Multimedia changed its name to the Department of New Media to better reflect the diverse range of teaching and faculty research interests, and the evolving role of technology in contemporary society. The department also offers the combined degrees of BFA – New Media/BMgt and BFA – New Media / BEd.

1.3 Class Sizes

The U of L is well-known for its small class sizes, which provide students with an opportunity to develop more personal connections with teachers and other students. It also creates an environment where students can contribute and participate in classroom discussions and activities. The first year studio-based courses are limited to about 30 students, while upper year classes range from 10 to 20.

1.4 Program Objectives

While technical skills and knowledge are extremely important in any media program, we believe that it is equally, if not more, important to develop students' conceptual and creative abilities. In all areas of

the new media industry employers need individuals who have strong creative sensibilities, conceptual and analytical skills, strong problem-solving skills, and an awareness of issues surrounding contemporary entertainment, art, and society. The major objectives of the BFA– New Media program are to:

- Link the emerging field of digital and interactive media to the traditional practices, techniques and theory
- Allow exploration of interactive media—both individually and as part of a group within an environment of creative and critical inquiry
- Provide students with a range of media tools, including industry-standard hardware and software
- Provide opportunities to connect with the new media industry via a supervised internship semester
- Become familiar with and contribute to the literature dealing with the many aspects of new media and technology in society, including media history and media studies, social and political issues, and approaches to popular culture
- Provoke thoughtful debate and discussion concerning the role interactive and new media technologies play and how they contribute to society, art, business, education, and entertainment

1.5 Post-Degree Employment

Our graduates have worked in a variety of traditional and non-traditional fields where media design and development are important. Graduates pursue careers in animation, graphic design, video/film production, television, web design, game design, media authoring, education, and others too numerous to list.

Students choosing the internship in their final semester work for a company or organization in an area of new media that is of interest to them. Students and new media employers often credit the internship as being an invaluable component for integrating students into the new media workforce. In the past, students have taken internships at web and graphic design houses, television production studios, video game studios, educational and religious institutions, animation and special effects studios, and 3D modeling/architecture studios. Students have interned across Canada including Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, and Montreal, and around the world (Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, China, Italy, California, Hawaii, Texas, and Utah).

Career and Employment Services (CES) assists U of L students and alumni with career exploration and work search needs. CES also serves employers and organizations by facilitating their recruitment of UofL students. Get more info at: <http://www.uleth.ca/ross/ces/>.

2. Equipment and Software Needs

2.1 Equipment Needs and Recommendations

The New Media Dept. tries to ensure all students are equipped properly to complete course assignments and undertake creative projects. Consequently, there is very little that students absolutely *need* to purchase before arriving (recommended equipment will be discussed in section 2.2 below).

However, we realize that family members sometimes want to give gifts to students entering university. We wouldn't discourage such purchases as students find it convenient to own their own digital video camera or home computer. While it is not necessary to purchase a still camera, video camera, computer or laptop, we offer suggestions and information to help make these decisions.

Purchasing a Computer or Laptop: It is suggested that you delay making a major computer purchase until later in your university career. During the first two years of study, students usually find the department's lab computers to be more than adequate for their studio-based courses. If need be, an inexpensive laptop, desktop or tablet can be used for writing essays and research, as well as basic graphics work. The advantage of waiting until the third or fourth year before making a substantial investment in a computer workstation (and/or other high-end equipment) that is capable of handling intensive audio/video, animation, or modeling is that you will have a much better idea of your future career path and, consequently, your specific hardware/software needs. Someone interested in graphic/web design, for example, has very different hardware and software requirements than someone interested in 3D modeling and animation. The UofL IT Store is a source for hardware and software, often with educational discounts available (<https://www.uleth.ca/information-technology/store/purchase>).

Still Cameras / Video Cameras: We *do not* suggest purchasing an *expensive* digital still camera or an *expensive* digital video camera before you arrive as, again, it is advisable to wait until your third or fourth year to consider such a purchase. For digital still cameras, an inexpensive, 8-10 megapixel digital still camera is more than adequate. If you are considering purchasing a high definition digital video camera it is recommended that you choose a camera that conforms to the department's camera equipment and editing systems. Choose a camera that shoots at a resolution of 1080p (1920 x 1080 pixels progressive frame) at 24 frames/second in the AVCHD format that records either to removable SDHC cards (Secure Digital High Capacity) rated at a Class 6 or higher or that records directly to an internal hard drive. If you choose a camera with an internal hard drive, ensure the camera has a USB 2.0, or higher, output to connect the camera to a computer.

2.2 Recommended Equipment Purchases

There are two kinds of equipment that incoming students are encouraged to purchase: first, a pair of quality headphones and, secondly, portable and archival storage devices.

Headphones: A quality pair of headphones is essential when working in the labs. Headphones enable you to properly hear stereo audio channels while not disturbing others in the labs. Any set of quality headphones with a 1/8th inch jack (stereo-mini or headphone jack) is adequate. Make sure the headphones are comfortable, durable and have a reasonably long cord.

Personal Storage Devices: Storage devices for computer files are essential. Two types of portable

storage to consider are Flash-based storage and HDD (hard disk drive) / SSD (solid state drive) based storage.

Flash-Based Storage: Flash memory is a small, light-weight memory device that connects to a computer through a USB port (called USB sticks, USB Flash memory, jump drives, or USB pen drives). Flash memory is reliable, inexpensive and portable (i.e., it can be carried on a key chain). Flash memory drives with 16 to 64 GB of storage are good for transferring relatively small or medium sized files. One or two of these drives should be purchased before you enter the program. Note: Flash-based memory has a limited lifespan and these should be replaced, especially under heavy usage, every couple of years in order to avoid data corruption.

Portable Hard Drive / Solid State Drive: Portable hard disk drives are the most common way to transfer and temporarily store computer data. Hard drives are available in internal and external form and *an external, portable drive* is an investment that New Media students should consider. Because students work with large volumes of data and extremely large files, it is essential to have a method to transfer, store and temporarily backup projects files. It is strongly recommended that students purchase a portable HD drive sometime in their first year.

Since these devices are used for transfer and back-up, quality is extremely important. Consider purchasing a quality hard drive from Lacie, Western Digital or other reputable companies. Currently, external hard drive capacities range from 250GB to 4TB. A 1 to 2TB hard drive is reasonable for student use (price range about \$120 to \$250). It is strongly recommended that a *portable* hard drive be purchased so the device can be carried to and from school on a regular basis. In addition, the portable hard drive should have a standard USB connection and a USB cable (make sure it is USB 2.0 compliant or higher).

Backing-up Data Stored on Portable Hard Disk Drives: Since a portable hard drive is used regularly and carried around with you, it should be considered only as temporary storage for project files. Therefore, files should be archived on DVDs or a large external hard drive (1TB to 4TB), which students should consider purchasing during their first or second year to more permanently archive course work and other creative projects.

2.3 Software

University labs are fully equipped with the latest software suites for student use. If a student is interested in purchasing software for home use, the University IT Store can order most of the industry standard software. Students are eligible for a substantial discount on educationally-priced software and orders are taken on a special order basis. A valid University ID card is required to receive educational discounts on software. U of L IT Store: <https://www.uleth.ca/information-technology/store/purchase>

2.3.1 Open Source Software Alternatives

In many instances, free, open source software can meet your various needs. Open source software has been developed by a community of users, which encourages participation in the design of the products. Open source software is free, is available for many different operating systems, and—in some cases—rivals the products sold commercially. Firefox (web browser), GIMP (similar to Photoshop), Libre Office (office applications), Blender (3D modelling), Inkscape (vector graphics software similar to Adobe Illustrator) are notable examples. For more info: <http://www.osalt.com/>

3. Academic Information

3.1 Student ID and Its Applications

A U of L Student ID card is necessary to receive any services at the university. The Student ID or “Campus Card” is used at Food Services, Recreation and Athletic Services, Library, Venda Copiers, Book Store and is helpful off campus as a second piece of photo ID. More info at:

<https://www.uleth.ca/information-technology/services/campus-id-cards>

3.2 The Bridge

The Bridge is U of L’s online student information system and can be used to apply for scholarships, register for classes, view final grades, purchase parking permits, and much more. Log into the Bridge and become familiar with the system as soon as you have a user ID and temporary password.

<http://www.uleth.ca/bridge/>

3.3 Academic Advising

The Fine Arts Student Program Services Office (Academic Advising) in W660 is open Monday through Friday from 9am-12pm and 1pm-4:30 pm (except holidays), throughout the year. The standard advising schedule has appointment bookings Monday to Thursday mornings. Appointments can be made online: <http://www.uleth.ca/finearts/advising/> Drop-in advising is normally available Monday to Thursday from 1:30 – 3:30 pm, and Friday mornings from 9:30 – 11:30 am. The standard schedule may be adjusted during busy periods.

The Fine Arts Student Program Services Office offers a variety of services free of charge and with complete confidentiality:

The Fine Arts Student Program Services Office offers a variety of services free of charge and with complete confidentiality:

- Assistance with career choices and academic program planning for New (High School), Transfer, Continuing, Post-Diploma, Second Degree, and prospective U of L Students
- Assistance in determining program of studies and Major
- Course selection
- Course sequencing
- Explanation and Interpretation of University Academic Regulations
- Assistance with academic program progress and accurate completion of Program Planning Guide
- Assistance with course Add/Drops
- Assistance with course Withdrawals
- Assistance with Program changes and completion of the Program Change form
- Registration Assistance (wait list services for required courses)
- Approval of Independent Study applications
- Assistance with and approval of requests for visiting student status
- Registration assistance for students on Academic Probation
- Assistance in planning to return after being required to withdraw

Should you have any questions about the program, course registrations, or program requirements,

contact the Fine Arts advising office.

4. University Living

Included below are a few helpful items of information that will help you

- find your way around campus
- locate accommodations
- seek out financial support
- become involved in organized extracurricular activities
- obtain additional assistance in your personal, academic, and professional development

A more complete list of services available to students is available at:

<https://www.uleth.ca/ross/resources>

4.1 Map of Campus

The campus map (buildings, parking areas, disability access) is available at:

<http://www.uleth.ca/campusmap/>

4.2 Housing

University Housing Services provides various residence options. Single and family accommodation are available, along with a University meal plan. Traditional style dorms & apartments come in one, two, and four bedroom suites. Townhome apartments are available for students with families or couples living common-law. For more information, visit the Housing Services website:

<http://www.uleth.ca/housing/>

4.3 Financial Aid

Attending university is an investment in your future. This investment can be rather expensive as tuition, living expenses, transportation, textbooks, equipment and other necessities add up. Students have many sources of income including UofL scholarships and awards, external scholarships, student loans or a student line-of-credit, and part-time work (on and off campus). An overview of financial aid is available at the Registrar's Office and Student Services (ROSS): <https://www.uleth.ca/ross/student-finance/>

4.3.1 Government Student Loans

Government student loans are the most common way students finance their education. You must apply for government student loans through your provincial government (your home province). More information is available here: <https://www.uleth.ca/ross/student-finance/student-loans>

4.3.2 Scholarships

The U of L offers a wide range of scholarships and bursaries that recognize the achievements of students pursuing their education at the UofL. These awards are granted primarily on academic proficiency. Other criteria (e.g. financial need, leadership potential, community involvement, artistic ability) may also be considered. Academic records from the last five years are considered for measurement of academic achievement.

You are eligible for awards if you are:

- a student entering the University from high school; or
- a student entering the University from another post-secondary institution; or

- a student continuing studies at the UofL

Carefully review the complete list of the UofL awards and the policies and procedures guiding the Awards Program in the *Awards and Scholarships* section of the UofL Calendar. More information at: <https://www.uleth.ca/ross/student-finance/awards>

4.4 Student Societies, Clubs and Organizations

Clubs are an essential part of the community atmosphere and provide opportunities to meet people, have fun and expand your involvement in your studies. Club membership is open to all full-time and part-time students, professors, staff and the community. In the past, New Media students have been active as members of CKXU (campus radio station, www.ckxu.com) and *The Meliorist* (student newspaper, www.themeliorist.ca).

For more information about societies, clubs, organizations and other aspects of campus life, visit U of L Students' Union website: <http://clubs.ulsu.ca/>

3.3.1 New Media Student's Society

The New Media Students' Society is dedicated to encourage the creation of content and providing opportunities for students to grow through their work. Contact nmssuleth@gmail.com for more info.

3.3.2 International Centre

The International Centre assists international students in adapting to campus life socially, academically, and culturally. They provide services, teaching, and guidance within a supportive, respectful, welcoming and collaborative environment including: English for Academic Purposes (EAP), English Language Services, and Study Abroad/Exchange.

4.5 Counselling Services

Free counselling from trained professionals with advanced degrees in clinical social work and/or psychology is available to students. Counselling Services offers personal and confidential sessions in Personal Growth, Academic Support, and/or Career Development.

To book an initial appointment, students are required to visit their office in AH153. Subsequent appointments can be scheduled by phone at 403-317-2845 or by email at counselling.services@uleth.ca. A Counselling Consent form will need to be completed prior to your first appointment and can be downloaded at: <http://www.uleth.ca/counselling/content/booking-appointment>.

Additional information about Counselling Services is available at: <http://www.uleth.ca/counselling>

5. Courses and Program Planning

5.1 Program of Study

The BFA -New Media program has specific requirements that must be fulfilled. You are responsible for registering for courses in their proper sequence, ensuring you have the proper pre-requisites to register in a specific course, and fulfilling all program requirements during your period of study. During your studies, be sure to make periodic appointments with the Fine Arts advising office to review your program status. At some time during your third year you should make an appointment with the Fine Arts advising office to review your transcript to ensure you are fulfilling all the program requirements so you can graduate on time.

Be aware that you fulfill the program requirements according to the Calendar year in which you entered the program. For example, if you entered the New Media program in 2016/2017, you fulfill the program

requirements as listed in the 2016/2017 program planning guide. New Media is constantly growing and evolving and, therefore, slight changes to the program may be introduced while you are a student. Even if a change is made to the program, you still follow the Program Planning Guide for the year you entered the program. If you decide that you want to follow any new program changes you will need to make an appointment with the Fine Arts Advising office to discuss such a change and officially declare that you will be following the program guide for a different Calendar year.

Current BFA- New Media Program Planning Guide: http://www.uleth.ca/ross/ppgs/nmed_bfa.pdf

Program Planning Guide Archive: <http://www.uleth.ca/ross/ppgs/ppg.html>

5.2 Writing 1000

Writing will form the heart of your university experience and even with the focus on visual and aural material in New Media, written communication is an integral skill for all kinds of careers, including those in new media. If you struggle with formal aspects of writing (spelling, grammar, composition) or you simply want to improve your skills, we highly recommend taking Writing 1000 (Introduction to Academic Writing) early in your academic career. It will help with both critical reading and writing at the university level. **Note:** Writing 1000 counts as one of the five electives in the BFA (New Media).

5.3 Electives and Liberal Education List Requirement Courses

5.3.1 Electives

The U of L is a Liberal Arts institution, which means the learning environment is structured so students receive instruction in their specific area of study (i.e., New Media) and also take courses in related fields from other departments and faculties. This approach to higher education produces well-rounded students who are knowledgeable about their field of study and understand how similar issues are approached in other fields. In the BFA New Media program, students learn about new media and broaden their creative and analytical skills by taking required and elective courses in Art. This is a good opportunity. For example, students interested in character animation can take specific courses in New Media and also take drawing, screenwriting, painting, and acting courses, all of which are integral to the creation of animation films.

In addition, many New Media courses can be taken as electives. These second, third, and fourth-year options include both studio courses and seminars. Some courses are offered on a regular basis while others, such as special topics classes, might be offered every second year. Courses offered in the upcoming semester are posted on bulletin boards outside the Fine Arts Advising office (W660).

Possible Electives in New Media, including Special Topics Courses

Studio Courses

Studio Courses

NMED 2015 - Digital Drawing and Animation

CINE 3010 - Cinematography and Lighting

CINE 3110 - Postproduction and Visual Effects

NMED 3640 - Character Animation I

NMED 4520 - Advanced Web Design

NMED 3040 - Colour Theory and Digital Photo Manipulation

NMED 3820 - Information Design

NMED 3720 - The Dynamic Web
NMED 3310 - Game Design: Theory and Practice
CINE 4420 - Screenwriting
NMED 4830 - Theory and Practice of Motion Capture
NMED 4710 - Video Game Production

Seminar Courses

NMED 3560 - Popular Narrative
NMED 2040 - Function and Culture of Design
CINE 3001 - Film Authorship
NMED 3250 - Media, Advertising, and Consumer Culture
NMED 3300 - Theory and Aesthetics of Digital Games
CINE 3550 - History of Animation (special topics course)
CINE 3810 - Expanded Cinema
CINE3850 - Film Noir (special topics course)
NMED 3200 - Film Genres (Series)
CINE 3850 - Film Theory (special topics course)
NMED 3650 - Modern Media, War and Propaganda (special topics course)

Required (*) and Possible Electives in Art, Drama & Music

Art

ART 2031 - Foundation Studio (Drawing and Image)*
ART 2032 - Foundation Studio (Object and Space)*
ART 3010 - Drawing (Principles and Practices)
ART 3026 - Photo Arts I
ART 3060 - Media Arts I (Introduction to Digital Studio)
ART 3061 - Media Arts II (Video Sketchbook)
ART 3160 - Drawing II (The Body)
ART 4150 - Experimental Film

Music

MUSI 1011- Materials of Music
MUSI 2500 - Introduction to Music Technology
MUSI 3030 - Film Music

Drama

DRAM 1000 - Introduction to Dramatic Arts*
DRAM 2340 - Movement I
DRAM 2750 - Playwriting I
DRAM 2810 - Introduction to Stagecraft
DRAM 3040 - Exploring Creativity
DRAM 3750 – Playwriting II
DRAM 4312 - Acting for the Camera

5.3.2 Liberal Education List Requirements Courses

The Liberal Education List Requirement is an integral part of your degree requirements. In the Liberal Arts tradition, students can choose from a variety of courses offered by other departments and faculties.

All U of L students take at least four courses from three different areas: Fine Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, and Sciences. A listing of courses and information about the Liberal Education List Requirement is located in the University Calendar (Part 4, Academic Regulations, Policies and Program Requirements): <https://www.uleth.ca/ross/academic-calendar>

Note: Fine Arts and Humanities requirements are completed by taking required New Media courses. Therefore, Liberal Education List Requirement consists of four Social Science courses and four Science courses.

Be sure to use your Liberal Education List courses and electives wisely to supplement your New Media study. For example, if you are interested in character animation, you might take a Kinesiology course (i.e. KNES 2600 - Functional Human Anatomy) that focuses on human anatomy and movement.

These following courses could be considered as fulfilling a Liberal Education List requirement or could be used as an elective (Note: some course may have additional prerequisites, so check the calendar):

Anthropology

ANTH 2110 – The Anthropology of Popular Culture (Social Science)

ANTH 2510 - Language, Culture, and Communication (Social Science)

Computer Science

CPSC 1620 - Fundamentals of Programming I (Science)

Education

EDUC 4765 – New Media and Learning (elective)

EDUC 4766 - Web-Based Learning (elective)

English

ENGL 1900 - Introduction to Language and Literature (elective)

ENGL 2610 - Survey of Children's Literature (elective)

ENGL 2800 - Rhetoric (elective)

ENGL 3010 - Literary Theory (elective)

ENGL 3650A - Contemporary Literature (elective)

ENGL 3800 - Creative Writing

Kinesiology

KNES 2110 - Biophysical Perspectives (Science)

KNES 2600 - Functional Human Anatomy (Science)

Library Science

LBSC 2000 - Library Research and Information Systems (elective)

Management

MGT 1000 - Introduction to Management

MGT 2030 - Introduction to Organizational Behaviour

Philosophy

PHIL 1000 - Introduction to Philosophy

PHIL 2000 - Studies in Philosophy (Series)

PHIL 2150 - Philosophy of Art

Psychology

PSYC 1000 - Basic Concepts of Psychology (Science)

PSYC 2320 - Cognition and Perception: Thinking and Seeing (Science)

PSYC 2800 - Social Psychology (Social Science)

Sociology

SOCI 1000 - Introduction to Sociology (Social Science)

SOCI 3740 – Digital Culture and Society (Social Science)

Depending on your interests and career goals, you may consider specific courses in Computer Science, English, History, Political Science, Philosophy, Religious Studies, Women’s Studies, etc. Also, each department offers special topics courses that are not usually listed in the Calendar. For these courses, check each semester’s timetable carefully (<http://www.uleth.ca/ross/timetable.html>).

5.4 Internship Education

New Media students have the option of choosing an industry internship placement during their final semester. The internship allows you to apply the education you received during your university studies in a variety of fields in new media. Students interested in a career in industry have benefited a great deal from their internship semester. If you are considering an internship contact the Internship Program Coordinator sometime during your third year. The New Media Internship program aims to:

- Provide opportunities to apply academic knowledge and skills
- Introduce students to various employment possibilities
- Help develop self-directed job search skills
- Offer challenging and relevant work experience
- Assist students in making realistic and informed career choices
- Provide opportunities to build valuable contacts within the new media industry
- Assist students in the transition from university to the workplace

Important Aspects of the Internship

- The Internship must include a minimum of 300 hours and not more than 400 hours (a student may remain for a longer period, if necessary)
- The Internship may be taken with educational institutions, businesses, new media companies, not-for-profit associations, and government
- Areas may include web design, graphic design, print, video production, 3D animation, 3D modeling, gaming, compositing and visual effects, etc.

Internship Program Coordinator

Ryan Harper-Brown, Internship Program Coordinator

Office: W858, Tel.: 403.394.3913, Email: <mailto:ryan.harperbrown@uleth.ca>

5.5 Advanced Studio

Instead of taking an internship, students can take the Advanced Studio plus three other New Media courses during their final semester.

Advanced Studio (plus three other New Media courses) enables students to pursue more independent, creative research. This is an ideal option for those wanting to pursue graduate studies or for those

wishing to devote more time to a specific project or larger body of creative work. Advanced Studio is a 'double' (or six-credit) course, which provides a structured environment where students can pursue a creative project in an area of their choice, under the supervision of a New Media faculty member. Advanced Studio provides students with the opportunity to conceive, research, develop, and complete a large-scale new media project. Students are given the freedom to work independently while, at the same time, drawing upon the expertise and guidance of the professor and the creative and critical input of other senior students.

5.6 Video Production Risk & Safety

New Media students involved in any course related photography, videography or video production of any kind on campus must plan ahead for the inconvenience such productions cause to other students, as well as facilitating the proper production time necessary to complete their work.

Video production and photography on campus requires the use of professional equipment, often lighting kits and assistive equipment, which expose passers-by to the hazards of tripping, hot lights and other potentially hazardous risks. In order to prepare for these inconveniences and risks students must be in contact with Risk & Safety prior to their production period, in order to fill out appropriate risk assessments, as well as being in contact with Security Operations at least one week before their production date. These pre-production materials will be introduced in class, but it will be each students responsibility to maintain these professional relationships for the benefit of your work in class, as well as learning proper professional decorum within the industry.

And finally, once you've started the program, please make sure you consult Part II of the Student Handbook: "Now That You Are Here – Things You Need to Know."

Also please note that policies, courses and procedures are in continual flux. While every effort will be made to keep this document updated, you should check with the Department Chair or the Advising Office for the most current information.