

New Media Student Handbook, Part I

Before You Get Here – New Media Student Information

Updated 2009

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 (New Media, Art, Drama, Music), digital technology, and liberal arts electives is a response to the demands of the new media industry — an industry whose hiring focus has shifted from a primarily technical workforce to a more artistically developed, diverse talent pool.

During their studies, students encounter instruction in a variety of areas including: graphic design (print/interactive), writing/narrative, web/online design, 3D modeling and animation, film/video production, cinematography and lighting, and special visual effects.

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 (U of L) 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 as well as 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.

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 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 in Art, Drama, and Music

- 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).

The U of L provides resources to help students find work after their education is complete.

The Career Resource Centre houses four effective programs that link U of L students with employers across Canada and beyond. Get more info at: <http://www.uleth.ca/crc/>

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 U of L 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. (Check 2.2 for recommended equipment.)

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 purchasing a computer until later in your university career. In the first two years of study, students usually find the university's lab computers more than adequate. Waiting until your third or fourth year provides you with a much better idea of your future career path and, consequently, your specific hardware/software needs. For example, someone interested in graphic/web design have different hardware and software requirements than someone interested in 3D modeling and animation.

Still Cameras / Video Cameras: We *do not* suggest purchasing an *expensive* digital still camera or an *expensive* digital video camera before you arrive. Wait until your third or fourth year to consider such a purchase. Inexpensive, 4-6 megapixel digital still camera is more than adequate. If you are considering purchasing a digital video camera, purchase a miniDV camera (uses miniDV tapes) or a SD (SecureDigital card) based video camera. The camera should have an IEEE 1394 (also called FireWire or i.Link) or USB 2.0 output to connect the camera to a computer.

2.2 Recommended Equipment Purchases

Two kinds of equipment are strongly recommends for incoming students to purchase: a pair of quality headphones and portable 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) 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 (can be carried on a key chain). Flash memory drives with 4 to 12 GB of storage are good for transferring relatively small or medium sized files. One or two of these drives should be purchased before you start the program.

Portable Hard 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 a quality hard drive from Lacie, Western Digital or other reputable companies. Currently, external hard drive capacities range from 80GB to 1TB. A 120 to 250GB 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 USB connection and a USB cable (make sure it is USB 2.0 compliant).

Backing-up Data Stored on Portable Hard Disk Drives: Since a portable hard drive is used regularly and carried around, it should be considered temporary storage for project files. Therefore, files should be archived on DVDs or a large external hard drive (500GB to 1TB), which students should consider purchasing during their second or third year to more permanently archive course work and other creative projects.

2.3 Software

University labs are fully equipped with the latest software suites and updates for student use. If a student is interested in purchasing software for home use, the University Bookstore 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 and Bookstore staff can answer questions about educational software discounts. Bookstore webpage: <http://www.uleth.ca/bookstore/supplies.html>

Information Technology (IT) sometimes has agreements with hardware/software manufacturers to provide educational discounts. For more info: <https://www.uleth.ca/it/store>

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 and, increasingly, these software packages available rival commercial products. Open source software is free and works on most operating systems. Firefox (web browser), GIMP (similar to Photoshop), Open 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

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:

<http://www.uleth.ca/it/services/campuscard/index.html>

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 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday (except holidays), throughout the year. Appointments can be made online:

<http://www.uleth.ca/ffa/advising/>

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
- Reception of pre- and co-requisite waiver forms
- 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

4.1 Map of Campus

Maps of the campus (buildings, parking areas, disability access) are at:

<http://www.uleth.ca/campusmap/> and on the back of the university calendar.

4.2 Housing

University Housing Services provides three residence options. Students coming directly from high school can live in the University Hall traditional residences, if they want meals provided.

Accommodations come in 1, 2, and 4 bedroom suites.

Transfer and continuing students entering University directly from high school can live in the Aperture Park apartment-style residences. 1, 2, and 4 bedroom arrangements are available.

Family and townhome style apartments are available for married and single students with families. Get details at: <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, and other necessities add up. Students have many sources of income including U of L scholarships and awards, external scholarships, student loans or student line-of-credit, and part-time work (on and off campus). An overview of financial aid:

http://www.uleth.ca/ross/student_finance/financial_aid.html

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 info at:

http://www.uleth.ca/ross/student_finance/loans.html

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 U of L. These awards are granted based 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:

- Entering university from high school
- Entering university from another post-secondary institution
- Continuing your studies at the U of L
- An athlete participating on an intercollegiate team

Carefully review the complete list of the U of L awards and the policies and procedures guiding the Awards Program in the *Awards and Scholarships* section of the U of L Calendar. More information at: http://www.uleth.ca/ross/student_finance/scholarships/awards.html

4.4 Student Societies, Clubs and Organizations

Clubs are an essential part of the community atmosphere and provide opportunities to get involved, meet new people, and have fun. Clubs are open to all full-time and part-time students. In the past, New Media students have been active with CKXU (campus radio station, www.ckxu.com), Japanese Anime & Manga Society (JAMS), U of L Film Club (ULFC), and *The Meliorist* (student newspaper, www.themeliorist.ca).

More info at: <http://ulsu.ca/>

5. Courses and Program Planning

5.1 Program of Study

The BFA (New Media) program has requirements that must be fulfilled. You are responsible for registering for courses in the proper sequence (consult the Program Planning Guide, see below), ensuring you have the proper pre-requisites to register in a specific course, and fulfilling all program requirements. If you need assistance, contact the Fine Arts Advising Office.

During your studies, be sure to make periodic appointments with the Fine Arts advising office to review your program status. At the beginning of year three and year four have the Fine Arts advising office review your transcript to make sure you are fulfilling all the program requirements so you can graduate.

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 2009/2010, you fulfill the program requirements as listed in the 2009/2010 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. You can officially changing your Calendar year if you want to follow new changes to the program but, in this case, make an appointment with Fine Arts Advising to discuss such a change.

BFA (New Media) Program Planning Guide:

http://www.uleth.ca/ross/ppgs/fine_arts/bfa_newmedia.pdf

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

5.2 Writing 1000

Writing will form the heart of your university experience and even with a 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 and sentence structure, composition) or want to improve your skills, we 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 GLER 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, Music and Drama. This is a tremendous 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 animated characters.

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

NMED 2850 - Computer Drawing and Illustration
NMED 3010 - Cinematography and Lighting
NMED 3620 - Digital Effects and Compositing
NMED 3640 - Character Animation I
NMED 3850 - Advanced Online Design (special topics course)
NMED 3850 - Documentary Film Production (special topics course)
NMED 3850 - Experimental Film and Video (special topics course)
NMED 3850 - Information Design (special topics course)
NMED 3850 - Game Design: Theory and Practice (special topics course)
NMED 4420 - Narrative for New Media II
NMED 4830 - Theory and Practice of Motion Capture

Seminar Courses

NMED 2850 - Popular Narrative (special topics course)
NMED 3250 - Media, Advertising, and Consumer Culture
NMED 3300 - Theory and Aesthetics of Digital Games
NMED 3850 - Film Noir (special topics course)
NMED 3850 - Film Genres: Comedy (special topics course)
NMED 3850 - History of Animation (special topics course)
NMED 3850 - Modern Media, War & Propaganda (special topics course)

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

Art

ART 1000 - Introduction to Art*
ART 2030 - Visual Foundations*
ART 3004 - Photo-Arts I & II
ART 3010 - Drawing I
ART 3026 - Photo Arts I
ART 3060 - Media Arts I (Computer Art)
ART 3061 - Media Arts II (Video Sketchbook)
ART 3160 - Drawing II (The Body)

Music

MUSI 1000 - Introduction to Music*
MUSI 1011 - Materials of Music*
MUSI 2500 - Music and Computers*
MUSI 3030 - Film Music

Drama

DRAM 1000 - Introduction to Dramatic Arts*
DRAM 2340 - Movement Studies: Fundamentals

DRAM 2750 - Dramatic Writing: Fundamentals
DRAM 2811 - Stagecraft I
DRAM 3030 - Film Studies
DRAM 3040 - Exploring Creativity
DRAM 3750 - Playwriting

5.3.2 General Liberal Education Requirements (GLER) Courses

General Liberal Education Requirement (GLER) component are 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 GLER is in the Calendar (Part 4, Academic Regulations, Policies and Program Requirements).
<http://www.uleth.ca/ross/calendar/calendar.html>.

Note: Fine Arts and Humanities requirements are completed by taking required New Media courses. Therefore, GLERs consist of four Social Science courses and four Science courses.

Be sure to use your GLERs 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 courses could be considered a GLER requirement or 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 - Multimedia and Learning Computer Science (elective)
EDUC 4766 - Web-Based Learning (elective)

English

ENG 2610 - Survey of Children’s Literature (elective)
ENG 3010 - Literary Theory (elective)

Kinesiology

KNES 2110 - Biophysical Foundations of Human Movement (Science)
KNES 2600 - Functional Human Anatomy (Science)

Library Science

LBSC 2000 - Library Research and Information Systems (elective)

Modern Languages

MODL 2900 - Aspects of Japanese Culture through Film (elective)

Psychology

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

PSYC 2800 - Social Psychology (Social Science)

Sociology

SOCI 3390 - Sociology of Mass Communication (Social Science)

SOCI 3740 - The Sociology of Cyberspace (Social Science)

Depending on your interests and career goals, you may could consider specific courses in Computer Science, English, History, Political Science, Philosophy, Religious Studies, Women's Studies, etc. Also, each department offers special topics courses not listed in the Calendar. Check each semester's timetable carefully.

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 and if you are considering an internship contact the Internship Program Coordinator sometime during your third year. The New Media Internship objectives include:

- Providing opportunities to apply academic knowledge/skills
- Introducing students to various employment possibilities
- Helping develop self-directed job search skills
- Offering challenging and relevant work experience
- Assisting in making realistic and informed career choices
- Providing opportunities to build valuable contacts within the new media industry
- Assisting in the transition from university to the workplace

Important Aspects of the Internship

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

Internship Program Coordinator

Anna Pickering, Internship Program Coordinator

Office: C874, Tel.: 403.394.3913, Email: anna.pickering@uleth.ca

5.5 Advanced Studio

Instead of taking an internship, students can take 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.

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."