

Differences between the Cinematic Arts Major and Media Major

The **Cinematic Arts Major** places a specific emphasis on film studies, learning and understanding the various histories and approaches to filmmaking, including international, independent, and experimental films, as well as popular Hollywood cinema.

There are several new lower division classes for the Cinematic Arts Major: Fundamentals of Directing, Fundamentals of Editing, and Fundamentals of Cinematography. Each of these classes will focus on their topic and help both filmmakers and film scholars understand how these techniques are deployed and best practices for their use. *These classes are not required of Media Majors in Visual Arts.*

The Cinematic Arts Major also has a component focusing on fundamentals of production. Students can choose intermediate-level courses across the university in editing, sound-design, screenwriting, 16mm filmmaking, VFX & motion-design, animation, and documentary techniques. The major will be offering new upper division classes in Animation, Advanced 3D and CGI, and Production Studio Technique. Majors will also need to complete a two-quarter Capstone-Thesis where students will have two quarters to demonstrate what they have learned as filmmakers and film scholars with their capstone project.

The **Media Major** in Visual Arts is a conceptually driven major training students to use their creative voice as artists using film and video tools, as opposed to more traditional painting/sculpting/design approaches. These students are trained as artists who use filmmaking as their medium. While some students do make "films," students are able to produce any kind of expanded artworks, including video installations, experimental Virtual Reality, performance work, and beyond.

That said, many of the production courses included in the Cinematic Arts major are derived from the 'intermediate' production classes of the Media Major. These classes teach fundamentals in techniques like editing, sound, VFX, scripting, and 16mm filmmaking.

The main difference between the two majors is the Cinematic Arts Major requires many more "film studies" courses -- an investment in interdisciplinary understandings on how to "read" a film, analyze a film, and explore films from many regions, backgrounds, and styles.

Another key difference is that the upper division coursework in the Media Major is more conceptually abstract and less focused on the specifics of cinema. Media Majors take "advanced" production classes called "Fiction & Allegory," and "Strategies of Self," among others. These are invaluable to the Media Major curriculum, but not included in the Cinematic Arts Major. In lieu of these, Cinematic Arts requires additional "film studies" courses as well as a required capstone/thesis project which is not required in the Media Major.

Cinematic Arts Major	Visual Arts Media Major
Emphasis on “film studies” and interdisciplinary approach (both film scholarship and production together, from multiple departments).	Emphasis on film/video/photography production within a visual-arts conceptual framework.
Production classes from departments like VisArts, Theater & Dance, Music, Communications, and Literature.	Interdisciplinary within Visual Arts, meaning students also take “out-of-major” classes in studio art, computing arts, speculative design, etc.
Lower Division courses in Directing, Editing, and Cinematography – open to petitions from community colleges. (Community College courses in topics like "digital video editing," "film production," or "cinematography" may be candidates for successful petitions.)	Inclusion of film and media studies classes, though fewer required than in Cinematic Arts.
Unique production classes in animation.	Advanced production “media practice” classes are thematically driven – including courses in “Fiction & Allegory,” “Strategies of Self,” and “Documentary.”
Capstone/Thesis sequence required for all majors.	No thesis/capstone requirement, though an Honors Thesis sequence is available for interested students.

For more information about the Cinematic Arts Major

Current UC San Diego undergraduate students: please use the [Virtual Advising Center \(VAC\)](#).

All others please email: filmstudies@ucsd.edu