

Vanderbilt University

Joint Ph.D. Program in Comparative Media Analysis and Practice (CMAP)



The Program

The joint-program in “Comparative Media Analysis and Practice” (CMAP) is designed to advance the critical investigation of modern media and the innovative design of digital media objects. The program aspires to produce new insights and discoveries in a highly interdisciplinary and collaborative framework, training graduate students for future leadership positions within and outside the academy. Students completing the program will receive degrees such as “Ph.D. in Anthropology and Comparative Media Analysis and Practice” or “Ph.D. in English and Comparative Media Analysis and Practice.” They are required to take four core team-taught seminars, sequenced over the course of two and a half years. Moreover, CMAP students are required to participate in two series of workshops during Vanderbilt’s Maymester specially designed to build more advanced skills in creating media objects (films, audio content, e-books, online educational materials, websites, innovative presentations; databases, etc.) and managing digital information.

Doctoral students enrolled in CMAP write just one dissertation to fulfill the requirements for the Joint Ph.D. In addition to satisfying all necessary requirements of their primary degree department, joint-degree dissertations incorporate perspectives that reflect a student’s participation in CMAP core seminars and digital practice modules. CMAP strongly encourages and serves as a mechanism to facilitate new and experimental formats of the dissertation. It will prepare students to use the full array of digital possibilities to develop and present their research. Additionally, during the semester leading up to their dissertation defense, students are required to design two online video or web presentations featuring their dissertation. One of these presentations should address specialized audiences, the other a lay public. CMAP students are also required to carry out 40 hours of internship work over the duration of their graduate studies. These internships offer opportunities to probe and advance students’ knowledge and media skills within non-academic settings. In their fourth or fifth year of graduate study at Vanderbilt, CMAP students may use their expertise in the theory, analysis, and making of digital objects in order to supervise a creative project of one or several undergraduate students in their respective home departments during one full semester. Part of Vanderbilt’s current effort to provide its undergraduate population with more immersive research experiences, this program element will offer CMAP graduate students a welcomed opportunity to translate specialized knowledge into effective working and leadership structures and thereby hone skills highly valuable in future professional as much as academic working environments.

CMAP’s central aim is to institutionalize skill-building, mentoring, and research within and across existing disciplines, departments, and centers while having students maintain their links to their respective home departments. The program adds intellectual perspectives and learning experiences that individual units on campus are currently not able to provide on their own terms.

CMAP's ambition is to significantly enhance the preparedness of Ph.D. students for academic and non-academic careers alike. It provides viable models, resources, and assistance to individual departments at Vanderbilt to recalibrate the training of their Ph.D. students in the face of shifting demands of the job market and the dramatic shrinkage of traditional academic jobs for doctoral students across the Humanities. In order to meet the demands of additional course work, training time, internship and research activities, CMAP will provide each student enrolled in the program with one year of graduate funding in addition to the five years of support they typically receive within their home departments at Vanderbilt. Each year CMAP will admit six graduate students from different fields of specialization to the program. They will participate in seminars, workshops, and research projects as a cohort. The program asks students to take 18-20 credit hours of course work in four seminars and two Maymester courses.

Required CMAP Seminars and Digital Practice Streams

- *CMAP 8001: Media and the Senses.* Rigorous introduction to modern media theory. Special attention will be paid to the way in which contemporary media address and reshape the human sensorium. Students will engage with different theories of vision, hearing, touch, smell, taste, and locomotion, and with how media technologies such as phonography, photography, cinema, and digital imaging have captured and reworked human sensory perception.
- *CMAP 8002: History of Media.* Designed to offer a broad historical survey of different media technologies and of how different media have been used (and feared) as modes of knowing and engaging with the world. Special attention to moments of historical rupture in order to reconstruct the technological protocols and social meanings of older and new media: the invention of the printing press, the advent of photographic and phonographic inscription in the nineteenth century, the transition from silent to sound film, the coming of personal computing, the emergence of x-ray and MRI technologies.
- *CMAP 8003: Media and Society.* Provides a rich set of concepts and perspectives to think about the role of media in modern society. Addresses different political and economic frameworks of media production and distribution, the role of authorship and copyright in an era of digital distribution, the tensions between privacy and publicness in a time of advanced data collection, the use of media in political decision making, the role of different media in the negotiation of gender and sexual difference, and media and disability. Additionally focuses on the rise of social networking, and the transformation of entertainment industries and academic institutions in times of online connectivity and digital data management.
- *CMAP 8004: Media Ecology.* Designed to study how media of all sorts have come to define the spaces of human life, action, experience and what we may call "our world." Focus on the impact of media technologies on built environments such as urban centers, academic learning spaces, museum and gallery settings, hospitals, transitory spaces (airports, malls, train stations), and domestic interiors. Additional attention to how different technologies and media are used to alter the shape of our natural surroundings, be it to address issues of climate change or remake specific landscapes in form of aesthetic projects.
- *CMAP 8010: Creative Media Practice.* Designed both to foster graduate students' skills in various areas of digital media practice and to help doctoral candidates to develop creative solutions to present research projects in their fields of specialization and matters of public

concern. During the first week of this course, students will expand their proficiency in digital sound and image manipulation, the design of websites and mobile apps, as well as the development of basic video games and 3D and virtual reality presentation formats. Meeting twice daily in 2-hour sessions, Vanderbilt faculty and staff experts, will expose students to different software and hardware options in these areas and deepen their knowledge of creative digital practice necessary to develop more complex hybrid media products. During the next two weeks of the course, students will apply these skills to develop two individual or collaborative projects under the daily supervision of a creative media artist and practitioner. Takes place during Vanderbilt's Maymester.

- *CMAP 8011: Working with Data*. Designed to familiarize students with basic knowledge about existing software strategies and hardware options, and to foster critical openness toward emerging technologies and techniques. Includes workshops and collaborative project-oriented work on Fundamentals of Digitization; Understanding Databases; Text and Data Mining Strategies; Understanding Topic Modeling; Fundamentals of Medical Imaging Techniques and Technologies; Introduction to Geographical Information and Mapping Systems; Basics Concepts of Statistics; Copyright Law in the Digital Age. Takes place during Vanderbilt's Maymester.

CMAP Faculty

Clifford Anderson (Associate University Librarian for Research and Learning | Jean and Alexander Heard Library); Derek Bruff (Center for Teaching); Joy Calico (Music); Laura Carpenter (Sociology); Madeleine Casad (Vanderbilt Center for Digital Humanities | Cinema & Media Arts); Jay Clayton (English | Curb Center for Art, Enterprise, and Public Policy); Jennifer Fay (Cinema & Media Arts | English); Doug Fisher (Computer Science); Rogers Hall (Peabody College | Teaching and Learning); Aimi Hamraie (Medicine, Health, and Society); Todd Hughes (Center for Second Language Studies); Claire Sisco King (Communication Studies | Cinema & Media Arts); Lutz Koepnick (German | Cinema & Media Arts); Mireille Lee (History of Art | Classical Studies); Dan Levin (Psychology and Human Development); Stan Link (Music), Christopher Loss (History); James McFarland (German | Cinema & Media Arts), Kevin Murphy (History of Art); Vesna Pavlovic (Art); Lynn Ramey (French); Jonathan Rattner (Cinema & Media Arts | Art); Helen Shin (English); John Sloop (Associate Provost for Digital Learning | Communication Studies); Helmut Smith (History); Rebecca VanDiver (History of Art); Mark Wallace (Dean of the Graduate School | Neuroscience | Vanderbilt Brain Institute); Steven Wernke (Anthropology); Christoph Zeller (German); Mel Ziegler (Art)

Contact

For questions and further information, please contact Lutz Koepnick, Gertrude Conaway Vanderbilt Professor for German, Cinema and Media Arts: lutz.koepnick@vanderbilt.edu.