

Media Studies Program

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The Media Studies Program encourages the understanding and critical evaluation of new and old media technologies, the centrality of media in global and local culture, in social and emotional life (i.e., media psychology), in politics and economics, and the contemporary and historical impact of media on individuals and societies.

As defined by the MEDS Program at Vassar, “media” includes all forms of representational media (oral/aural, written, visual), mass media (print, television, radio, film), new media (digital multimedia, the Internet, networked media), their associated technologies, and the social and cultural institutions that enable them and are defined by them. The Program emphasizes several interrelated approaches to the study of media: multidisciplinary perspectives derived from the arts, humanities, social and natural sciences; the historical study of various forms of communication; theoretical and critical investigation of how media shape our understandings of reality. We also focus on the dynamic interrelationship of media industries, cultural texts, communications technologies, policies, and publics; examination of global, non-Western, indigenous, and oppositional media forms and practices; applied work in media production and the use of media technologies.

2026–2027 MEDS Steering Committee Members

Director: William Hoynes;

Steering Committee: Sole Anatrone (Italian), John Andrews (Media Studies), Giovanna Borradori (Philosophy), Paulina Bren (International Studies), Hiromi Tsuchiya Dollase^a (Chinese and Japanese), Wenwei Du (Chinese and Japanese), Dara N. Greenwood (Psychology), Maria Hantzopoulos (Education), Sophia Harvey (Film), William Hoynes (Sociology), John Hulsey (Art), Justin Patch (Music), Ronald Patkus (Library), Louis Römer^a (Anthropology), Eva Woods Peiró^b (Hispanic Studies);

Declaring a Major

Prospective majors should consult with the Program Director (Prof. Bill Hoynes) and MEDS interns (Gene and Isabella) to discuss the declaration process. Students should come prepared to outline their interests in Media Studies and their preliminary thoughts on the courses that will constitute their Major curriculum.

Prospective Majors will submit **two documents** to declare:

1. A completed **Media Studies Program Planning Form**, identifying a potential Faculty Adviser and the specific courses that fulfill the major requirements. *See requirements below.*
2. The **Focus Statement**, outlining the student's interests, objectives, and intended course of study. The Focus Statement, which can be delivered either in a short answer form or combined in an essay, should address the following points:
 - a. Core questions and interests of the student's proposed Media Studies curriculum; b. Disciplines and approaches that will ground the student's multidisciplinary course of study;
 - b. Preliminary ideas for a Senior Project;
 - c. If applicable, how the student's JYA plan fits within the scope of their Media Studies major.

Requirements for the Concentration (11.0 units required for Major)

Required MEDS Courses (5 units)

- MEDS 160 Approaches to Media Studies
- MEDS 250 Exploratory Media Practices
- MEDS 260 Media Theory
- MEDS 310 Senior Seminar
- 0.5 MEDS 303 Senior Project Preparation- Intensive
- 0.5 MEDS 304 Senior Project Completion- Intensive

*We accept **one ungraded unit** towards the major that may be derived from CEL or JYA credits.

Distributional Content Area Courses (6 units)

Six units distributed as follows (which may or may not be cross-listed with Media Studies):

- Two 200-level courses, ordinarily drawn from two different departments or programs
- Two 300-level courses, ordinarily drawn from two different departments or programs
- One course focused on historically marginalized populations, non-Western, postcolonial, decolonial, Global South frameworks and/or media
- One practice-based course (e.g., a course with an emphasis on "media-making" or production)

Additional Information

We accept one ungraded unit towards the major that may be derived from CEL, study abroad (non-Vassar-sponsored programs), or other ungraded credits from coursework/research at Vassar.

Up to 4 graded classes taken through Vassar's London Program on Media and Culture may be counted towards the major, in consultation with a major advisor.

Relevant non-English language courses may count towards the major, subject to review and approval by a major advisor.

Students must submit a plan of study, including justification of selected electives. The plan is reviewed and adjusted by the program director and overseen by the assigned major advisor.

*After declaration of the concentration, no courses applied toward the concentration may be elected NRO. Up to two courses can count for two majors.