
DIGITAL ARTS FAQs

Get the Answers to the Questions You've Been Asking (And Ones You Didn't Even Know You Had)

If you know what you're doing, your time at Chapman will be incredibly rewarding. Here are some questions other students have asked and tips that our faculty recommend to help things go more smoothly.

Contents

The Digital Arts Program at Chapman	3
1. What should I know about the Digital Media Arts Center (DMAC)?	3
2. How do I reserve rooms in the DMAC?.....	3
3. How do I reserve a locker in the DMAC?	3
Advising.....	3
1. What can I expect from my faculty advisor?	3
2. What can I expect from my academic center advisor?.....	3
3. What should I bring with me to my advising appointment?	3
4. How do I know who my advisor is?.....	3
5. In what ways does the Digital Arts provide personalized education?	4
Planning for Graduation	4
What do I need to do to make sure I graduate on time?	4
Major/Course Requirements.....	4
1. What is the significance of my "catalog year?"	4
2. Is there a resource outside the classroom to learn some of the software programs I need to know?.....	4
3. How can I get a course substitution or a course at another school approved?	5
4. Can I take a course in the major or minor pass/no pass?.....	5
5. How do I get into a class that's full? How does the waitlist work?.....	5
6. What classes should I take and in what order?	5
7. What is the Sophomore Survey?	5
8. What is an Area of Study?.....	5
9. How do I declare an Area of Study?.....	6
10. What is Senior Thesis?	6
11. What is Digital Arts night?	6
12. How many hours should I expect to devote to my senior thesis?.....	6
13. Can I work on a Senior Thesis as an undergraduate?	6
14. How can I help with visual effects on a live action film?	6
Software and Technology.....	7
1. Do I need a laptop?	7

2. Mac or PC?	7
3. How much computer power/what components will I need?	7
4. What software should I have on my personal computer?	7
Study Abroad	8
1. Can I take DA courses overseas when I study abroad?.....	8
2. What countries offer accepted courses, if I choose to study abroad?	8
Internships	8
1. How do I find out about internships?	8
2. How do I apply for an internship?.....	8
3. Should I have someone look over my CV?.....	9
4. How do I show my portfolio to an employer?	9
5. How do I go about adding an internship?.....	9
6. When should I do an internship?	9
Extracurricular Opportunities/Career Preparation	9
7. What is the DIGITAL ARTS CLUB?.....	9
8. How do I join the CHAPMAN DIGITAL ARTS CLUB FACEBOOK PAGE?	10
9. How can I visit game studios, animation and visual effects companies?	10
10. How can I meet industry professionals?	10
11. How do I find a job after graduation?.....	10
Advice from Current Students:	10

The Digital Arts Program at Chapman

1. What should I know about the Digital Media Arts Center (DMAC)?

The DMAC is the new home of our Digital Arts Program, and a state-of-the-art facility for learning digital arts. Your Chapman KEY CARD is striped to admit you to the building 24/7. You will take almost all of your digital arts classes in the DMAC, including animation, visual effects and design classes. The DMAC has an Animation Lab, VFX Lab, Art Studio, private suites, and a 4K-3D theater. You can register to have your own locker in the DMAC. The DMAC also has a grab-and-go food service open until 2:00AM, and a grand atrium with lots of comfortable couches and chairs, the perfect space to relax and network with your fellow students.

2. How do I reserve rooms in the DMAC?

Consult the Room Reservations section of the Current Students website at http://ftvstudents.chapman.edu/dodge/room_reservations/

3. How do I reserve a locker in the DMAC?

Fill out the form on the Dodge College website at <https://fs18.formsite.com/DCFMA/form187/index.html>

Advising

1. What can I expect from my faculty advisor?

Your faculty advisor can help you plan what classes to take in the major and when. They can also offer advice on career planning, internships etc. Although you should also take advantage of the advising center to plan your GE courses, your faculty advisor can give you advice here as well and should review your program evaluation with you to make sure you are on track for graduation.

2. What can I expect from my academic center advisor?

Your academic advisor can help you plan your GE courses and give you advice on how to satisfy your IMD Cluster Requirement. To schedule an appointment, call (714) 744-7959 or just stop in during their walk-in hours on Mondays from 8:30 am – 4:20 pm. Their offices are located in Beckman Hall, Suite 406.

3. What should I bring with me to my advising appointment?

Whether you're meeting with your faculty advisor or your academic center advisor, you should always bring a copy of your program evaluation and your student ID with you. This will help your advisor answer any questions you may have about your remaining requirements. Your program evaluation can be found in the Campus Solutions Self Service Menu.

4. How do I know who my advisor is?

You should receive an email when you first enter Chapman advising you as to which faculty member you have been assigned as an advisee. In any case, your advisor is listed with your class schedule in the Campus Solutions Self Service Menu.

5. In what ways does the Digital Arts provide personalized education?

The DA faculty are very invested in you—in getting to know you individually, and in being available to meet with you to discuss your goals, class projects or just life. Take advantage of their interest by reaching out, coming in to office hours or just stopping in the hallway for a chat. You do not and should not limit your outside of class interactions to just your assigned advisor.

That said, you should share your career interests with your faculty advisor so that he or she can help you identify specific classes and other opportunities, such as internships, that will support your career goals.

Planning for Graduation

What do I need to do to make sure I graduate on time?

1. Know your catalog year.
2. Understand the undergraduate degree requirements:
 - a. Total number of units needed to graduate (124)
 - b. Upper division units required to graduate (42)
 - c. Credits outside of the major
 - d. GE requirements
3. Know how to read your program evaluation and check it every semester.
4. Make sure you are aware of prerequisites so that you can take courses in the required order.
5. Watch what semester various courses are offered when you create your 4-year plan.

Major/Course Requirements

1. What is the significance of my "catalog year?"

You will be held to the specific requirements of the catalog to which you are assigned—freshmen are under the catalog for the year in which they enter Chapman. Transfer students are under the catalog for the year before you enter Chapman, working on the assumption that before you transferred you were planning your courses at your first school to work with what was being offered at Chapman. If you decide to change to a later catalog because the requirements in the major have changed or you wish to choose another major not offered under your catalog, you will also be held to any changes that may have been put in place in regards to GE, credit limitations, etc. It is best to run a “what if” scenario with your program evaluation and to meet with your academic center advisor before you decide to change catalogs for any reason.

2. Is there a resource outside the classroom to learn some of the software programs I need to know?

Yes, Chapman students have free access to the online software tutorial at Lynda.com. You can access this resource at <https://webfarm.chapman.edu/lyndacas> using your Chapman username and password.

In addition, Dodge College has posted several tutorials on how to use our software. You can access this resource at <http://ftvstudents.chapman.edu/production/tutorials/> using your Chapman username and password

Finally, Digital Arts students have free access to Digital Tutors. In the first week of class, you will receive an email inviting to complete your registration. After filling out the registration form, you will be able to access this resource at www.digitaltutors.com using your Chapman email address and the password you create upon registration.

3. How can I get a course substitution or a course at another school approved?

You need to send the name, course number and catalog description of the course at the other institution to the Division Chair, Janell Shearer at shearer@chapman.edu along with the name of the school where you plan to take the course, a copy of your program evaluation, and the name and number of the course you suggest that the outside course be substituted for. She will review the request with the DA faculty and let you know whether the substitution is approved.

4. Can I take a course in the major or minor pass/no pass?

No.

5. How do I get into a class that's full? How does the waitlist work?

Show up on the first day of class to see if there is room available. However, be advised that which students are admitted to a class is entirely up to the instructor. Typically, students are admitted on the basis of class standing, thus seniors have preference over juniors, juniors over sophomores etc. In addition, majors have preference over minors or non-majors. Your position on the waitlist does not guarantee you a place in the class once the first day of the semester begins. The waitlist only places students in a class when a previously enrolled student drops the course *before the semester begins*. Once the semester begins, the instructor can choose whom to admit, regardless of any student's previous standing on the waitlist. Basically, the waitlist means nothing once the term begins.

6. What classes should I take and in what order?

Your faculty advisor can give you a suggested 4-year advising plan. Consult your catalog year and program evaluation regularly, paying special attention to courses that have prerequisites and what semester various courses are offered.

7. What is the Sophomore Survey?

The Sophomore Survey is a questionnaire you will be asked to complete in the spring semester of your sophomore year to help you gauge your skills and talents, your success and interests against the three areas of study offered in the major. You will receive the survey via email and when you have completed it, you will be asked to come in for a one-on-one interview with a DA faculty member to review your progress in the program thus far.

8. What is an Area of Study?

An Area of Study is a concentration of courses that will prepare you to specialize in one aspect of Digital Arts, either Animation, Visual Effects or Art Direction.

9. How do I declare an Area of Study?

Select the Change of Major form for your catalog year on the [Registrar's Office Forms](#) page of the Chapman University website. Select Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees and from the drop down menu, choose Digital Arts and the appropriate Area of Study.

10. What is Senior Thesis?

Your Senior Thesis will be the “capstone” project of your career here at Dodge College. It will be the project you create, using your accumulated knowledge and skills, to represent your talent and abilities to future employers. Senior Thesis production will cover three semesters. It begins in the Spring of Junior Year, when you conceive of the idea for your project and lay the foundations; artistically, technically, and logistically. The Summer offers you three months to advance your project. During the Fall semester of Senior year, you will be in the thick of production, and in Spring of Senior year you will wrap production, do post-production, and finish. During Senior year, you should expect to devote **a minimum of 20 hours/week** to your thesis project. In Digital Arts, all Senior Thesis projects are screened on Digital Arts Night, when we have our public screening and big after-party for family and friends.

11. What is Digital Arts night?

“Digital Arts Night” is another term we use for our annual “Senior Thesis Show,” when all senior projects are shown to the public. Under the rules of Dodge College, all seniors must publicly screen their final project in order to graduate. Our show happens in the Folino Theater, usually during the last week of the Spring semester. The senior class sits in the front row and seats are reserved for seniors’ family and guests. The Digital Arts faculty judge the students’ work and award nominations for the coveted DMA Awards for Best Achievement in Animation, Visual Effects, and Design. The after-party is always a blast, with special decorations, lighting effects, and the traditional “picture cake,” featuring images of every senior film in colorized, edible frosting.

12. How many hours should I expect to devote to my senior thesis?

During the first semester of this three-semester project, students receive weekly homework assignments. In the following two semesters (during your senior year), you should be putting in 15-20 hours minimum per week outside of class.

13. Can I work on a Senior Thesis as an undergraduate?

You can volunteer to help on a Senior Thesis project, but it is more typical to be “recruited.” Seniors will often visit undergraduate class sections, explain the needs of their projects, and solicit help. By working on a Senior Thesis project, you not only help that senior student, but gain technical expertise and a collaborative work experience. If you decide to do this, be sure you understand the requirements of the job, do not misrepresent your skills, agree on the amount and complexity of the work you will do, and follow through on your commitment once you begin.

14. How can I help with visual effects on a live action film?

As a Digital Arts major, you may be approached by live action student filmmakers to do FX on their films. It is NOT a good idea to do this unsupervised. The best way, and the way we

support and encourage, is for you to work under the guidance of the VISUAL EFFECTS COMMITTEE (VFXC). The VFXC is composed of faculty who understand the complexity and scope of the work. The VFXC reviews all live action film requests, decides what tasks are right for DA majors, and supervises that work. You can contact the VFXC and let them know of your interest and skillset. You should request any live action filmmaker to submit their project to the VFXC through this form: http://ftvstudents.chapman.edu/production/vfx_request_form/

Software and Technology

1. Do I need a laptop?

We encourage every student to own a personal laptop.

2. Mac or PC?

Dodge College is a PC environment. However, most software programs run on both Macs and PCs. One software package used extensively in video games is 3DS Max, which is made ONLY for the PC Operating system. In the industry, most designers and illustrators tend toward Macs. So generally, if you are leaning toward gaming, a PC is probably best. For design and illustration, a Mac might be a better choice.

3. How much computer power/what components will I need?

We recommend having a computer that has a lot of RAM and a good video card. If you are using a laptop, make sure it uses dedicated RAM and not shared RAM. Shared RAM takes away some processing power and has been known to cause software launching issues and/or errors. And you should ALWAYS have an external hard drive to back up your material often.

4. What software should I have on my personal computer?

The two predominant software packages used in digital arts are made by Autodesk and Adobe. To download the recommended Autodesk software that we use in the Digital Arts program, go to: <http://www.autodesk.com/education/free-software/all>. Create a log-in and then pick the software from the list. We recommend the following to get started:

- a. Maya
- b. 3DS Max (not for Mac)
- c. Mudbox

To download the recommended Adobe software that we use in the Digital Arts program, go to: <http://www.adobe.com/creativecloud/buy/students.html> Create a log-in, sign into the Adobe Cloud, then pick the software from the list. We recommend the following to get started:

- a. Adobe Photoshop
- b. Adobe After Effects
- c. Adobe Illustrator
- d. Adobe Premiere

Study Abroad

1. Can I take DA courses overseas when I study abroad?

Yes, but in general you should not plan on finding courses that will be approved for the major when you study abroad, as they are pretty rare. If you plan to study abroad, you should assume that most of the courses you will take will be either GE courses or general electives. Thus, it is often best to plan to do study abroad before your senior year.

2. What countries offer accepted courses, if I choose to study abroad?

Your best source for reviewing what courses might transfer is Chapman's Center for Global Education. We are not aware of any courses that meet DA requirements at this point in time. See [Study Abroad](#).

Internships

1. How do I find out about internships?

We encourage every DA undergraduate to experience interning at a company whose work reflects the student's career interests. There are several ways to find an internship. You can find internships through Chapman's [Career Development Center](#), through the Dodge College *Slate*, which is emailed to students each week, through your faculty, or through your own contacts. In addition, postings happen weekly in the *Slate* and on the Chapman Digital Arts Club Facebook page alerting you to internship opportunities. The DA Club also maintains a Google docs listing of internships for its members.

Some companies have a dedicated website that will allow you to apply through an application portal. One of the best ways is to connect with alumni and build relationships with current working professionals. Google is your best friend, and literally typing in "animation internship," "art internship," or "production internship" should generate a large list of results. Past students have interned at Sony Pictures Entertainment/Imageworks, Titmouse, Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network, LeapFrog, Digital Domain, Third Floor Previz, Blizzard Entertainment and many more!

2. How do I apply for an internship?

Once you have identified an internship opportunity, carefully review the requirements and details of the position. Be sure it is something you would be qualified to do and that you understand the application process. Typically, employers ask you to fill out an application form (which they supply), accompanied by a resume (often called a CV, or "curriculum vitae"), letter(s) of recommendation, and a portfolio or sample reel of work. For internship, the portfolio and reel may not be required.

It is wise to compile a personal list of internship websites with deadlines/requirements, as many will require at least a cover letter in addition to the resume. When putting together your resume, know your audience and target position. For instance, if you are seeking a storyboard internship, be sure to include a link to your sketch blog and relevant story classes. If you are

seeking a production internship, make sure to include any on-set experience you have, officer positions, or any roles that require the same skills needed for desired position. Ultimately, one of the best ways to stand out when applying is to have a professional connection to the company you are applying for. Attending networking events, respectfully reaching out on social media, and asking insightful questions can help a current professional recognize your potential and forward your information through internally. This tends to be one of the more effective ways to present yourself as a qualified candidate for an internship position.

3. Should I have someone look over my CV?

We recommend meeting with your DA advisor to discuss the style and content of your CV before applying for internships.

4. How do I show my portfolio to an employer?

Studios used to ask for DVDs. No more! Almost all now require that you supply your work digitally. We recommend creating a portfolio website to showcase your creations. Upload still images and/or compressed video files of your animation, VFX, models, life drawings, etc. so that internship sites and/or HR managers can easily access your work. Ideally, your site's domain name should be your first name last name.com<<http://name.com>>. It is critical that your site be simple and reliable to access. There are tutorials and samples on how to create such a website. Developing a portfolio is a life-long process; you should expect to be constantly updating your site with your strongest and most professional looking work. Keep it short and sweet!

5. How do I go about adding an internship?

Once you are offered an internship, you need to find a faculty advisor and register through the Career Center.

6. When should I do an internship?

You can do an internship any time, but you will be better prepared, have more to offer your internship employer, and be more competitive in getting an internship if you wait until you have a few DA classes under your belt?

Extracurricular Opportunities/Career Preparation

7. What is the DIGITAL ARTS CLUB?

The Digital Arts Club is the most important student-run organization for Digital Arts majors in Dodge College. The “DA Club” is an officially chartered Chapman group. Although membership is open to all registered Chapman students, the Club is primarily composed of DA majors. Meetings are typically held on a bi-monthly basis, but activities are frequent and on-going. Officers are elected to serve a one-year term. The Club sponsors many social events, including field trips, beach parties, and holiday parties. The Club organizes supplementary art activities such as sketch classes, life drawing sessions, and Saturday seminars featuring industry guests. Participation in special events such as dinner parties for guests or studio tours happens through the Club.

8. How do I join the CHAPMAN DIGITAL ARTS CLUB FACEBOOK PAGE?

The Facebook page is maintained by the DA Club officers. It is the main source of information for DA Club activities and “all things digital arts” at Dodge College. It is a closed group, but any registered DA major will be admitted upon request. It’s the best way to keep track of what’s happening at Dodge, as well as a source for news and information about the art and science of digital arts.

9. How can I visit game studios, animation and visual effects companies?

The Digital Arts program offers more field trips than most film schools. These trips include major studios (Disney, Dreamworks), smaller specialty companies (Blur, Alterian FX, and game companies (Blizzard, Riot). Notification of upcoming field trips are made through department-wide “email blasts” and postings on the DA Facebook Page. To attend a field trip, RSVP to the designated address in the notice. You will be notified if you are chosen to be on the trip.

10. How can I meet industry professionals?

The top artists, directors, producers, and designers in the industry visit Dodge College. Keep an eye on the Chapman SLATE on-line publication as well as the DA Facebook Page to keep track of upcoming visits. Often, guests of the Digital Arts program will be hosted at a sit-down dinner in the DMAC Conference Room – which you can attend! Just submit your name through the DA Club. If chosen, you’ll be expected to be on-time, dressed “business casual.”

11. How do I find a job after graduation?

Although we don't guarantee job placement, Chapman's Career Development Center can help you search for relevant places of employment. The Digital Arts department also maintains a list of companies that have hired digital arts graduates.

Advice from Current Students:

1. Intersperse introductory classes with GE in freshmen and sophomore years.
2. Try to take more technical classes in junior and senior years.
3. Don't take an internship as a freshman.
4. Every freshman should create his or her own 4-year plan--a roadmap--and review it with your advisor.
5. Meet with your faculty advisor as soon as possible in your freshman year. It benefits both you and your advisor.
6. In preparing for an internship or job interview, read all of the material on the company website to make sure you know where to send work. Be succinct and professional in your communications with the company. Choose quality over quantity in selecting work for your portfolio.

