MFA in Media Production

The MFA is a practice-based degree program where students develop a creative and research inquiry anchored in media production and engaged with relevant historical and theoretical contexts. The typical student profile is the maker whose practice lies at the core of an engaged critical inquiry. Students are expected to define their practice, its historical and theoretical context, and its position in relation to the professional field(s) with which they are in dialogue.

There are four key moments of evaluation and forward progression in the course of the MFA student's matriculation:
End of first semester (Graduate Seminar I); First Year Review; End of fourth semester (Grad Sem II); MFA Defense.
Faculty teaching Graduate Seminar I evaluate the end of first semester presentation (Grad Sem I for MFA).
The entire faculty evaluate the First Year Review.
Faculty teaching Graduate Seminar II evaluate the end of fourth semester exhibition.
The MFA Thesis Committee evaluates the MFA Defense.
The Director of Graduate Study may observe the MFA Defense and evaluates (approves / denies) the final submission of MFA project / thesis.

First Year Review (MFA)

Statement of Interest (2 pages, roughly 500 words) submitted one week in advance. Please include working bibliography (not part of the total word count).

Presentation (15 minutes)
- background / prior work (1 min)
- courses taken since UB (not as a list, but as a way of contextualizing your work and process of inquiry, experimentation, approach to creative problem solving, etc.)
- framework (primary interests and context for the practice: other practices, historical and theoretical context). Basically, who are you in conversation with, and how is your work entering that conversation, and to what impact / significance?
- material production itself (finished work and/or works in progress)
- an early (understandably tentative) framework for written thesis

Criteria for evaluation:
- ability to articulate the practice and its historical / theoretical context
- robustness of practice (degree of productivity, extent of iterative process / trial and error, prototyping, rehearsal, rough cut screening, scenario based testing, etc.)
- creative contribution, novelty, originality, significance
- quality, craftsmanship, execution, conceptual integrity / rigor of the finished work (or work in progress)
- written and verbal ability; presentation skills
- ability to design and structure effective presentation within time limits