

## **Art History Undergraduate Handbook**

### **General Information for All Students**

This handbook is designed to orient you to the undergraduate offerings and the undergraduate major in Art History. The handbook is intended to help guide you in your career and to clarify issues vital to your success in our Department. Please read it in conjunction with the general undergraduate requirements stated in the [Undergraduate Guide](#).

The art history program offers a wide range of courses in the art of various periods and cultures. It also includes courses in visual culture and material culture. These serve majors in art history and many count toward the humanities requirements for the College of Letters and Science.

Art history explores painting, sculpture, architecture, and the graphic and the decorative arts but is interdisciplinary by nature. It relates to the study of art, communications, gender and women's studies, anthropology, history, history of science, literature, philosophy, religion, and language. To complement their study of art history, students are encouraged to elect courses in all of these fields beyond the general L&S requirements.

### **Career and Professional Opportunities**

An art history major with a good undergraduate record can move on to a number of different professional and graduate opportunities both inside and outside the art world. A BA in art history may lead to employment in historic preservation, auction houses, art sales, art therapy, advertising, interior design, art-related publishing, television, film, design, historical consulting (such as set design or themed wedding planning), art journalism, museum social media programming, and many other options.

The BA in art history is also a useful for Pre-Med, Pre-Law, and Pre-Business students.

An MA in art history is generally required for positions in museums, galleries, art centers, auction houses, and archives. Some professions require specialized training; art conservation, for example, requires the study of chemistry.

Students who plan to pursue careers as post-secondary teachers and scholars, or as museum curators and directors, must acquire a PhD.

Other professions, requiring an MA or PhD include: Art Insurance Adjuster, Art Crime Investigator, Artist's Agent /Assistant, Arts Organization Director, Cultural Events Organizer, Appraiser/Authenticator, Art Law, Art Librarian, or Art Consultant.

## Courses in Art History

The Major requires 9 Courses in total, 2 200 levels, 3 300 levels, 2 400 levels, and 1 Proseminar. These must also fulfill Chronological, Geographic, Theory and Method Requirements. For details see the [Undergraduate Guide](#).

You can begin your study of art history in several different ways. Students unfamiliar with art history usually elect introductory courses. In Art History 201, 202, 203, 241 and 242 (all of which are open to freshmen), students explore the principal developments in architecture, sculpture, painting, and printmaking from ancient to modern times. We strongly urge students interested primarily in western art to take the western surveys (201 & 202) in chronological order and as early in their career as possible. They are required for majors in the standard program.

Intermediate and advanced courses (courses numbered 300 and above) more closely examine areas of art introduced and broadly treated in the survey courses. These courses address specific regions, periods, and topics in a more detailed manner than the broader surveys. In these and subsequent courses you will engage in more specialized art historical scholarship as you prepare and write research papers. These count towards the L & S requirement of fifteen credits of upper level work in the major.

The 500-level **proseminars** are undergraduate seminars for small groups of students that focus on a specific topic. At least one 500-level proseminar is required for graduation, and **should be taken as a junior**, preferably after previous coursework in that area. Many students take more than one proseminar (the proseminar does not fulfill an area requirement). **Note: proseminar enrollment is usually open to declared majors only.**

The 600 Special Topics number is generally assigned to courses offered only once or occasionally. 601-602 is a museum course that is offered irregularly, generally taught in connection to planned exhibitions at the Chazen Museum of Art.

Students may also elect to write senior theses (692, Senior Thesis; 681-682, Senior Honors Thesis) or undertake independent research (Directed Study, 698, 699). All of these research projects require considerable planning before the work is undertaken. If you are going to write a senior thesis you should begin to discuss your plans during the junior year with the faculty member who will supervise it. Grant deadlines for senior thesis and independent projects are in the fall and winter.

## Material Culture Certificate

The purpose of the certificate is to create a program of study for upper-level undergraduate students in the area of material culture. Material culture encompasses the study of the creation, uses, meanings, and interpretations of the tangible products of human endeavor.

Sponsoring departments for the Material Culture Studies Certificate Program are the Department of Art History in the College of Letters and Sciences, and the Environment, Textiles and Design Program in the School of Human Ecology. See more [here](#).

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## **Components of the Major**

Undergraduate majors may choose the [standard program](#) or [Honors in the Major](#). Majors are strongly advised to take the necessary survey courses as early in their careers as possible.

## **Expository English**

Majors are encouraged to take advantage of the many opportunities to improve and practice their writing through writing-intensive classes, the Writing Fellows Program, and the Writing Center. Your progress in expository English will be closely monitored in art history papers and examinations.

## **Honors Program**

Art History offers its own Honors in the Major option. Students who wish to continue graduate studies in art history or related fields, or who simply desire more advanced work in art history, are strongly encouraged to pursue honors in the major. Students should begin to plan honors work in art history with their honors advisors as early in their careers as possible.

To Obtain Honors in the Major: Students must maintain a Grade Point Average of 3.5 in art history courses. This minimum is a cumulative average for all art history courses and, thus, may fluctuate above and below 3.5 from semester to semester without jeopardizing the students' honors enrollment status.

Students must complete six-eight intermediate/ advanced credits, concentrating in a specific area or period in art history or a related department, such as history or literature. These are to be pre-planned & completed in addition to the usual requirements for the art history major. **Courses must be cleared with your Advisor and the DUS, and additional paperwork is required to count them in DARS** (you should take care of this no later than the beginning of your final semester.)

The proseminar should be completed during the junior year.

An Honors Thesis must be written in the chosen area of concentration, distributed over two semesters (4-8 credits).

For important guidelines on the Senior Honors Thesis, please read [Guidelines for Preparation of the Senior Honors Thesis](#) and [Senior Honors Thesis Colloquium Presentation Requirements](#)

## **Courses in Other Fields**

### **Language:**

The Department has no language requirement beyond that of L&S (and we do require this of **all** majors regardless of degree program.) However, advanced language training in more than one language is a primary requirement for entrance into graduate school. Students who contemplate any further work in art history should start acquiring the major languages of their fields as undergraduates (German, French, and Italian for western art; Latin and Greek for ancient art; Latin for medieval and Renaissance art; German and Dutch or French for northern European art; and Asian and African languages for those areas). Feel free to speak with the experts in each field to determine which languages you should learn.

### **Other University Departments:**

Every student has different needs and interests and we can advise you of courses in other departments that might be pertinent to your interests in art history. We can prescribe no single direction. As would be true of any program of studies in the College of Letters & Sciences, the best program for an art history major would include several courses that give you extensive experience in writing and expose you to a broad range of learning and disciplines. You must determine which courses sound important for your needs: feel free to discuss your choices with the DUS, the Academic Advisor, or a faculty member in our department, in other departments, and in South Hall if you are unsure of exactly which courses to take.

Most art history majors find that courses in history, history of science, anthropology, English, comparative literature, and foreign languages complement their studies in art history. A student interested in modern art might want to take a course on German film in communication arts, a course on the Holocaust in theater, a course on Nietzsche in philosophy, or courses in contemporary literary theory in the foreign language departments. A student of Renaissance art might be attracted to a course on cartography in geography; a student of Northern European art might want a course in the history of Baroque music. Students in African and Asian art will be attracted to many different courses on the history and culture of those areas.

Many of our students have participated in the University's interdisciplinary programs, including Integrated Liberal Studies, Medieval Studies, and Gender and Women's Studies. Some have found relevant courses in the history of design and material culture in Design Studies, and in Landscape Architecture. Many have taken courses in art, film and television. Several have found stimulus for their understanding of art history through courses in Sociology and Psychology.

Graduate programs in art history look for students with backgrounds rich in the humanities, history, languages, and other areas directly related to the chosen field of study. All professional degree programs and employers, on the other hand, are principally interested in mature candidates with strong, well-rounded undergraduate records, serious purpose, and excellent written and spoken English. If you think you might be interested in graduate studies, we would be happy to advise you on courses that would be important for your future.

## **Additional Information for Majors**

### **Undergraduate Advising and Declaration of the Major**

We would like to get to know potential majors and majors! Please meet with both our Academic Advisor and our Director of Undergraduate Studies as soon as possible. Even if you ultimately choose a different major, we may be able to help you find your direction and the courses that meet your interests. It takes time to determine which major you will pursue, and we can offer guidance and perspective about what our field offers.

Consultation for students considering an undergraduate major usually takes place after a student has had at least one course in art history. The College of Letters & Science encourages students to declare their major **no later than the end of their sophomore year**, and the Art History Department strongly supports this. Given the requirements of the department, students who do not declare by their junior year, regardless of their academic standing, should be prepared to add an extra semester or two to their undergraduate career. Forms and information are available from Academic Advisor and the departmental office (232 Elvehjem).

### **Other Advising Needs**

#### **Two specific committees deal with student grievances**

##### **Grievances:**

The Departmental Grievance Procedures for questions about grades, misconduct, or other problems is listed [here](#). The Grievance Committee is comprised of three professors, all of whom will be willing to discuss procedures with you.

##### **Sexual Harassment:**

The Sexual Harassment Committee is comprised of persons who have received training from the Office of Affirmative Action. They will follow procedures from that office for discussing and reporting incidents of sexual harassment or discrimination, starting with a pledge of confidentiality if requested. More on whom to contact [here](#).

### **Studies Abroad**

Art History majors have regularly participated in University of Wisconsin study-abroad programs throughout the world, and are encouraged to plan for these wonderful opportunities by consulting with the DUS or the Academic Advisor. Detailed information may be found by visiting the Office of International Academic Programs, 252 Bascom Hall, 265-6329, e-mail: [peeradvisor@bascom.wisc.edu](mailto:peeradvisor@bascom.wisc.edu).

### **Joint Research Projects with Professors**

The University awards funding for several projects that may be undertaken in tandem with professors as research assistants, apprentices, or joint investigators. Watch for announcements for these competitions, including the Undergraduate Research Scholars Program, Sophomore Summer Honors Research Apprenticeships, and Hilldale Undergraduate-Faculty Research Grants.

### **Fellowships for Study After Graduation**

Some of the major grant-giving organizations such as the German Academic Exchange Service, Fulbright Commission, and National Endowment for the Humanities regularly advertise opportunities for students to work and study here and abroad immediately following graduation. Look for the announcements or ask the DUS to guide you to that information.

### **Internships**

Undergraduates find many excellent internships both in study-abroad programs and in museums, galleries, and foundations in the United States. Students should speak with the DUS and a faculty member advisor about possibilities for credit before they undertake internships. The department can grant varying amounts of credit for internships under the course number AH697. Note that students cannot receive credit for remunerated or solely experiential work.

### **Art and Art History beyond the Classroom**

You will use the excellent facilities of Kohler Art Library and other libraries of the University and college for classwork, but you should also be aware of their full range of resources.

Art history students enjoy many opportunities to discuss, look at, and work with art beyond the classroom. Many have joined the Art History Society (an undergraduate organization open to both majors and non-majors). Its regular meetings include discussions, guest lectures and invited lectures by faculty, graduate student consultations on how to apply to graduate school, visits to current exhibitions throughout Madison or to Tandem Press, and informal social events. The group is run according to the needs and interests of the students who participate in it and meets as frequently as the members desire. Many of our students also join the Wisconsin Union Directorate Art Committee, a student-run organization that plans several art-related events and exhibitions each year.

All of us enjoy our ready and continuous access to the Chazen Museum of Art's collections, temporary exhibitions, guest lectures, and opening night receptions. You might not be aware that you can also make appointments through the museum offices, curators, and registrar to study works in storage. The prints and drawings in the print room, for example, are generally available to students by appointment. You might also have the opportunity to work in the Chazen: undergraduates are generally employed only as volunteers, but get excellent experience working as docents or acting as assistants in a variety of capacities. Some departments in the museum (and in the Kohler Art Library) also employ work-study students. Similar opportunities are available at the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art.

The department, museum, and many other units schedule lectures on art and art history in the Elvehjem Building throughout the year. Graduate students, faculty, artists, and other scholars will present on a variety of topics. Undergraduates are encouraged to attend and we hope that you will regularly check campus schedules, the Chazen Museum's bi-monthly Calendar (available at either end of the museum's Paige Court), and Art History Week (department news, events, and information). Art History Week will note if advanced papers or relevant background materials will be available in the department office beforehand. Lectures consist of University Lectures Committee sponsored lectures, lectures in conjunction with Chazen Museum exhibitions and other offerings throughout the University. Please watch for Art History department posters and e-mail notices as well as Art History Week for more information.

**Note:** Information on courses fulfilling specific area requirements may not be current in the *Undergraduate Catalog*; always check our All Course List page for the most up-to-date course listing.