

Book Arts, MFA

The MFA degree focuses on book arts as a hands-on practice, a creative medium, and a historical and cultural phenomenon. Its principal objectives are to provide aesthetic and scholarly contexts for the making of creative work and the study of book history, arts, and technologies. It also offers a structured program in book-related disciplines for graduate students interested in studio arts, librarianship, and literary and cultural history.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- have a breadth of hands-on and contextual (studio, art historical, cultural) experience with art, craft, and design disciplines within the book arts;
- deeply study one or more craft disciplines within the book arts;
- demonstrate sustained, project-based problem-solving accomplished through art-making;
- show proficiency in hand skills (scale: competence, proficiency, excellence/mastery);
- experience an interdisciplinary synthesis of studio art, scholarly practice, and material analysis;
- practice critical thinking within and across these book-based disciplines; and
- gain professional development experience and exposure to career tracks.

Requirements

The Master of Fine Arts in book arts requires a minimum of 60 s.h. of graduate credit, including a thesis. Students complete core courses and work with a faculty advisor to design an individualized curriculum spanning several studio practice disciplines: artist bookwork, bookbinding, lettering arts, digital bookwork, papermaking, or letterpress printing. The degree culminates with the successful completion of a thesis. A Graduate College program grade-point average of 3.00 is required.

All courses must be taken on an A-F basis. A maximum of 12 s.h. of transfer coursework is permitted and requires program approval.

Courses should be selected in consultation with an advisor.

The MFA in book arts requires the following coursework.

Requirements	Hours
Core Requirements	21
Studio Practice Courses	15
Scholarly Inquiry and Material Analysis Courses	6
Additional Electives	18

Core Requirements

With the permission of the advisor, students may be permitted to replace UICB:6520 Graduate Book Arts Workshop with a workshop taught outside of the Center for the Book.

Course #	Title	Hours
These courses:		
UICB:6510	Book Art Seminar: History, Practice, and Critique	3

UICB:6520	Graduate Book Arts Workshop (taken three times for 3 s.h. each)	9
-----------	---	---

Three of these (9 s.h.):

UICB:4205/ BKAT:4205	Bookbinding I: Materials and Techniques	3
UICB:4300/ ARTS:4300	Letterpress I	3
UICB:4400/ ARTS:4400	History of Western Letterforms	3
UICB:4415/ ARTS:4415	Introduction to Classical Calligraphy	3
UICB:4420	Introduction to Medieval Calligraphy	3
UICB:5110/ BKAT:5110	Papermaking I: East Asia, Nepal, and Contemporary Practice	3
UICB:5130/ BKAT:5120	Papermaking I: Central Asia, Europe, and Contemporary Practice	3

Studio Practice Courses

Course #	Title	Hours
15 s.h. from these:		
UICB:3280/ BKAT:3280	Elements of Book Art	3
UICB:3380/ BKAT:3380	Letterpress	3
UICB:4100/ BKAT:4100	Paperworks	3
UICB:4205/ BKAT:4205	Bookbinding I: Materials and Techniques	3
UICB:4210/ BKAT:4210	Boxes and Enclosures	3
UICB:4270/ BKAT:4270	Bookbinding II	3
UICB:4280/ BKAT:4280	Artists' Books	3
UICB:4290	Historical Book Structures	3
UICB:4300/ ARTS:4300	Letterpress I	3
UICB:4370	Topics in Letterpress	arr.
UICB:4380/ ARTS:4380	Letterpress II	3
UICB:4390/ ARTS:4390	Book and Publication Design	3
UICB:4400/ ARTS:4400	History of Western Letterforms	3
UICB:4405	Introduction to Calligraphy Intensive	3
UICB:4415/ ARTS:4415	Introduction to Classical Calligraphy	3
UICB:4420	Introduction to Medieval Calligraphy	3
UICB:4490/ ARTS:4490	Advanced Studies in Letter Arts	3
UICB:5110/ BKAT:5110	Papermaking I: East Asia, Nepal, and Contemporary Practice	3

UICB:5130/ BKAT:5120	Papermaking I: Central Asia, Europe, and Contemporary Practice	3
UICB:5140/ BKAT:5140	Papermaking II: Contemporary Papermaking	3
UICB:5170/ BKAT:5170	Papermaking III: The Papermakers	3
UICB:5180/ BKAT:5180	Advanced Projects in Paper	1-3
UICB:5210/ BKAT:5210	Bookbinding III	3
UICB:5220/ SLIS:5535	Book Conservation	3
UICB:5280	Advanced Projects in Bookbinding	3
UICB:5330/ ARTS:5330	Letterpress III: Imagemaking	arr.
UICB:5340/ ARTS:5340	Letterpress III: The Handprinted Book	3
UICB:5380	Advanced Projects in Letterpress	3
UICB:5520/ SLIS:5520	Studies in Book History and Technologies	0-3

Scholarly Inquiry and Material Analysis Courses

Additional courses may apply to this area with departmental approval.

Course #	Title	Hours
Two of these for a total of 6 s.h.:		
UICB:3140/ ENGL:3140	Literature and the Book	3
UICB:3142/ ENGL:3142	Topics in Book History	3
UICB:3401/ ENGL:3401	Literature and Book History	3
UICB:3980/ ARTH:3980	American Print Culture	3
UICB:4150/ ENGL:4150/ SLIS:4150	Introduction to Book Studies	3
UICB:4910/ HIST:4422/ SLIS:4910	The Book in the Middle Ages	3
UICB:4920/ HIST:4429/ SLIS:4920	The Book in Early Modern Europe	3
UICB:4390/ ARTS:4390	Book and Publication Design	3
UICB:5600/ SLIS:5600	Reading Culture: History and Research in Print and Digital Media	3
UICB:5930	Topics in Material Analysis	3
UICB:6100	Book Studies Proseminar	3
UICB:6370/ SLIS:6370	Topics in Book Studies	3
UICB:6530/ HIST:6130	Book History Seminar	3
ARTH:3870	History of Photography	3

Additional Electives

Students complete 18 s.h. in additional electives from Center for the Book courses (prefix UICB) numbered 3000 or above, excluding UICB:3900. A maximum of 6 s.h. in UICB:6540 MFA Thesis Hours may be applied to this requirement.

With the permission of an advisor, students may be able to apply a maximum of 6 s.h. of coursework outside of the Center for the Book toward this requirement.

Combined Programs

MFA/MA in Library and Information Science

The Center for the Book and the School of Library and Information Science offer a combined Master of Fine Arts in book arts/Master of Arts in library and information science. The combined degree program allows students with strong interests in the book arts, book history, and material book studies to also gain expertise in library and information science. The degrees provide book artists and librarians with credentials reflecting a depth of skills and knowledge that have been used to secure positions in special collections libraries and archives. Students in the combined program earn both degrees by completing fewer semester hours than if each degree was completed separately.

Separate application to each degree program is required. Applicants must be admitted to both programs before they may be admitted to the combined degree program. For more information, see the MA in library and information science in the catalog.

Graduate Education

Graduate education prepares students with advanced knowledge and skills in specialized fields. At the University of Iowa, the Graduate College advocates for student-centered graduate education and supports equitable application of rules and policies across graduate programs.

Academics

University of Iowa graduate credentials are regulated by policies and requirements found in the Graduate College Manual of Rules and Regulations. This includes minimum grade-point average (GPA) requirements for academic standing and degree conferral. The Graduate College sets the minimum requirement. Individual graduate programs may establish higher GPA requirements.

Admissions

Graduate student applicants must meet admission requirements for both the Graduate College and the program to which they have applied. University of Iowa graduate admission requirements are published by the Graduate College and on the Graduate Admissions website.

Financial Support

Graduate students might be eligible for financial support. Several contingencies apply, including degree program and award type, satisfactory progress toward degree, satisfactory completion of all duties related to an appointment, and availability of funding. Graduate students should inquire directly with their program for more information about funding

availability. The Graduate Student Employment Standards govern the employment relationship between the University of Iowa and all graduate teaching and research assistants in all matters except wages, which are covered by an existing collective bargaining agreement or the conditions of an applicable federal grant.

Admission

Applicants must meet the admission requirements of the Graduate College; see the Manual of Rules and Regulations on the Graduate College website. Visit Admissions on the Center for the Book website for more information.

Academic Plans

Sample Plan of Study

Sample plans represent one way to complete a program of study. Actual course selection and sequence will vary and should be discussed with an academic advisor. For additional sample plans, see MyUI.

Book Arts, MFA

Course	Title	Hours
Academic Career		
Any Semester		
60 s.h. of graduate level coursework must be completed; graduate transfer credits allowed upon approval. More information is included in the General Catalog and on department website. ^a		
Graduate College program GPA of at least 3.00 is required. ^b		
Work with academic advisor to determine appropriate graduate coursework and sequence.		
Hours		0
First Year		
Any Semester		
Core course ^c		3
Core course ^c		3
Core course ^c		3
Studio Practice course ^d		3
Studio Practice course ^d		3
Studio Practice course ^d		3
Scholarly Inquiry/Material Analysis course ^e		3
Hours		21
Fall		
UICB:6510	Book Art Seminar: History, Practice, and Critique	3
Hours		3
Second Year		
Any Semester		
Studio Practice course ^d		3
Studio Practice course ^d		3
Studio Practice course (if needed) ^d		3
Scholarly Inquiry/Material Analysis course ^e		3
Hours		12
Fall		
UICB:6520	Graduate Book Arts Workshop ^{f, g}	3
Hours		3

Spring

Participate in third semester review, usually at the beginning of the fourth semester. Refer to UICB Student Handbook and academic advisor for more details.

UICB:6520	Graduate Book Arts Workshop ^{f, g}	3
Hours		3

Third Year

Any Semester

Additional elective course ^h		3
Additional elective course ^h		3
Additional elective course ^h		3
Additional elective course (if needed) ^{h, i}		3
Additional elective course (if needed) ^{h, i}		3
Hours		15

Fall

UICB:6520	Graduate Book Arts Workshop ^{f, g}	3
Hours		3

Spring

UICB:6540	MFA Thesis Hours ^j	0 - 6
Exam: Master's Final Exam ^k		
Hours		0-6
Total Hours		60-66

- a Students must complete specific requirements in the University of Iowa Graduate College after program admission. Refer to the Graduate College website and the Manual of Rules and Regulations for more information.
- b Graduate College program GPA is comprised of all courses that are approved degree requirements. If a student takes more than the minimum required number of semester hours to complete the degree, but all courses taken are eligible to count toward the degree, those courses will be included in the Graduate College program GPA.
- c Choose three courses for a total of 9 s.h. See the General Catalog for list of approved courses.
- d Complete a total of 15 s.h. of studio practice courses. See the General Catalog for list of approved courses.
- e Choose two courses for a total of 6 s.h. See the General Catalog for list of approved courses.
- f Must be taken three times for a total of 9 s.h.
- g With the permission of the advisor, students may be permitted to replace UICB:6520 with a workshop taught outside of the Center for the Book.
- h Complete 18 s.h. of additional electives from Center for the Book courses (prefix UICB) numbered 3000 or above, excluding UICB:3900. A maximum of 6 s.h. in UICB:6540 may be applied to this requirement. With the permission of an advisor, students may be able to apply a maximum of 6 s.h. of coursework outside of the Center for the Book toward this requirement.
- i Hours may be required for this additional elective if fewer than 6 s.h. of thesis credits are completed.
- j Maximum of 6 s.h. of thesis credit allowed.
- k Thesis defense.