

Book Arts, MFA

The MFA degree focuses on book arts as a hands-on practice, as a creative medium, and as a historical and cultural phenomenon. Its principal objectives are to provide aesthetic and scholarly contexts for the making of creative work and for 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, in librarianship, and in literary and cultural history.

Learning Outcomes

Students will learn:

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

Requirements

The Master of Fine Arts program 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 book work, bookbinding, lettering arts, digital book work, papermaking, or letterpress printing. The degree culminates with the successful completion of a thesis.

The MFA requires the following coursework.

Studio Requirements

Courses from the following areas should be selected in consultation with an advisor.

Required Core Electives

Course #	Title	Hours
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: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

Graduate Book Arts Workshop

Course #	Title	Hours
UICB:6520	Graduate Book Arts Workshop (must be taken three times for a total of 9 s.h.)	9

Book Art Seminar

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

Studio Practice Electives

Course #	Title	Hours
Studio practice courses		15

Scholarly Inquiry and Material Analysis Requirement

Course #	Title	Hours
Two of the following, or students may request to use related courses approved by the head of the scholarly inquiry or material analysis area (6 s.h.):		
UICB:3140/ ENGL:3140	Literature and the Book	3
UICB:3142/ ENGL:3142	Topics in 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:4930/ HIST:4430	Topics in Material Analysis	3
UICB:5600/ SLIS:5600	Reading Culture: History and Research in Print and Digital Media	3
UICB:6100	Book Studies Proseminar	3

Additional Electives

Course #	Title	Hours
Elective courses (may include 0-6 s.h. of thesis credit)		15

Thesis

Course #	Title	Hours
Can be taken for a maximum of 6 s.h.:		
UICB:6540	MFA Thesis Hours	arr.

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.

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.

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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		
Required Core Elective ^c		3
Required Core Elective ^c		3
Required Core Elective ^c		3
Studio Practice Elective ^d		3
Studio Practice Elective ^d		3
Studio Practice Elective ^d		3
Scholarly Inquiry or 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 Elective ^d		3
Studio Practice Elective ^d		3
Studio Practice Elective (if needed) ^d		3
Scholarly Inquiry or Material Analysis Course ^e		3
Hours		12

Fall		
UICB:6520	Graduate Book Arts Workshop ^f	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	3
Hours		3

Third Year		
Any Semester		
Additional Elective ^g		3
Additional Elective ^g		3
Additional Elective ^g		3
Additional Elective (if needed) ^{g, h}		3
Additional Elective (if needed) ^{g, h}		3
Hours		15

Fall		
UICB:6520	Graduate Book Arts Workshop ^f	3
Hours		3

Spring		
UICB:6540	MFA Thesis Hours ⁱ	0 - 6
Exam: Final Exam-Thesis		
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. from UICB:4205, UICB:4300, UICB:4400, UICB:4415, UICB:5110, UICB:5130.
- d Complete a total of 15 s.h. of studio practice elective courses. Work with academic advisor to determine appropriate graduate coursework and sequence; see department website for specifics.
- e Choose two courses for a total of 6 s.h. from UICB:3140, UICB:3142, UICB:3980, UICB:4150, UICB:4910, UICB:4920, UICB:4930, UICB:5600, UICB:6100.
- f Must be taken three times for a total of 9 s.h.
- g Complete a total of 15 s.h. of additional elective courses. Work with academic advisor to determine appropriate

- graduate coursework and sequence; see department website for specifics. Up to 6 s.h. allowed for thesis credit.
- h Hours may be required for this additional elective if fewer than 6 s.h. of thesis credits are completed.
- i Maximum of 6 s.h. of thesis credit allowed.