

Art History, MA

The master's degree program in art history is intended for students who wish to acquire a broad knowledge of art history, as well as of the field's theoretical and historical foundations. The MA is intended to prepare students who plan to continue for a PhD in art history as well as for students interested in careers in museums, galleries, and nonprofit organizations.

Learning Outcomes

Students are expected to demonstrate:

- basic understanding of the development of the history and methodology of art history;
- basic understanding of primary source material in five of the following distribution fields: African, architecture, Asian, ancient, medieval, Renaissance and Baroque, 18th- and 19th-century European, American, and modern/contemporary;
- reading proficiency in either French or German;
- skill in visual analysis;
- skill in contextual analysis based on relevant research;
- sustained critical thinking, writing, and speaking abilities; and
- knowledge and skills necessary to be effective teaching assistants for courses numbered 1000-1999.

Requirements

The Master of Arts program in art history requires a minimum of 30 s.h. of graduate-level coursework and is offered without a thesis. Students are expected to acquire a broad knowledge of art history and to become familiar with major periods and monuments of world art. They also become proficient scholars, receiving training in research methods and theory necessary for subsequent scholarship at the PhD level.

Students must maintain a cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.50. Only one semester of academic probation is allowed. All MA candidates, including transfer students, must complete at least 24 s.h. in residence at the University of Iowa.

Students must earn a grade of B or higher in semester-long courses (numbered 3000 or above) in five of the following distribution fields: African, Asian, ancient Mediterranean, medieval, Renaissance and Baroque, 18th- and 19th-century European, American, and modern/contemporary. These courses must be taken after completion of the BA degree.

Students must complete a qualifying paper that demonstrates their ability to conduct scholarly research and convey ideas in writing appropriately for the discipline and the student's specialization field.

The College of Education offers an MA program in art education; see Teaching and Learning in the catalog.

Required Courses

Students must satisfactorily complete ARTH:5000 History and Methods during their first fall semester of enrollment and must register for an art history seminar in their first, second, third, and fourth semesters of enrollment.

They must also satisfactorily complete ARTH:6020 Art History Colloquium every semester that they are enrolled for 9 s.h.

or more or are serving as teaching or research assistants. Students who are not employed as teaching or research assistants or are registered for less than 9 s.h. are strongly encouraged to attend the colloquium.

Students must attend at least six public lectures by visiting scholars in art history over the course of their enrollment as MA graduate students. Proof of attendance is provided by short written responses (150-250 words) turned in to the director of graduate studies within two weeks of the lecture. Students should register for an art history seminar each semester during their first four semesters.

Courses outside the curriculum of the School of Art, Art History, and Design's art history division do not carry art history credit. Cross-referenced courses not taught by art history faculty members also do not carry art history credit.

Directed Studies

Directed Studies (ARTH:6040) is designed for graduate students who already have taken one or more advanced courses in a specific art history field. It provides students with an opportunity to work one-on-one with a professor to continue specific research interests developed in lecture courses or seminars, or on topics that eventually may be the subject of a thesis or dissertation. ARTH:6040 cannot be substituted for a lecture course already offered in the program. Students must discuss their decision to take this course with the professor involved and obtain the professor's approval. The topic must be within the professor's range of expertise.

Students meet with their professor once a week. The hours of work and written assignments required for the course must be equal to a comparable regularly scheduled course. This course is not available through Distance and Online Education.

Language Requirement

Students must demonstrate proficiency in French or German by the end of their third semester. Students may demonstrate proficiency by:

- two years of university-level coursework;
- earning a grade of B or higher in an advanced language course numbered 3000 or above;
- achieving at least an 80% proficiency score on the level 5 milestone of the relevant Rosetta Stone language program; or
- scoring 500 or above on the University of Iowa World Languages Placement Test.

In exceptional circumstances, a student could make a direct petition to the faculty upon receiving a recommendation from their advisor. Language courses do not carry degree credit.

MA Committee

The MA committee consists of a student's advisor and two additional tenured or tenure-track faculty members in art history.

MA Qualifying Paper

Prior to graduation, each candidate must complete a qualifying paper on a topic that stems from a term paper written for an art history graduate seminar or a course numbered 3000 or above. The paper should be between 5,000 and 7,500 words in length (20 to 30 pages excluding bibliography and illustrations). A student chooses an advisor who specializes in the student's field of concentration.

In cases where a student wants to focus on a topic that involves more than one field, the art history faculty strongly recommends that the student work closely with faculty members in both fields.

Final Examination

The final examination constitutes an oral defense of the qualifying paper. The final examination meeting with the MA committee normally takes place toward the end of a student's last semester of coursework.

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

Application materials should be uploaded onto a student's admissions profile (see instructions under "Application Procedures"). All applicants must meet the admission requirements of the Graduate College and the School of Art, Art History, and Design.

The deadline for submission of materials is Dec. 15 for the art history program; admission is for the following fall.

School of Art, Art History, and Design Requirements

Prospective graduate students must meet the School of Art, Art History, and Design's admission requirements for the specific degree program they plan to enter. They must submit

application materials to Graduate Admissions and to the specific program they wish to enter.

All applicants must meet the admission requirements of the Graduate College; see the Manual of Rules and Regulations on the Graduate College website.

Although exceptions may be made when other components of the application are strong, applicants should have an undergraduate grade-point average of at least 3.25 on a 4.00 scale.

Application Procedures

Prospective students may apply online through the Admissions website. After submitting their application, applicants will receive email instructions on how to access their admissions profile on MyUI. Applicants then upload the required supplemental documents through a secure portal.

Required documents include transcripts from all colleges and universities an applicant has attended, contact information for three individuals who are able to assess the applicant's potential for graduate study designated to provide letters of recommendation, a statement of purpose, and the Supplemental Graduate Application Information form.

Art history applicants should also supply a research paper (preferably from an art history course) or thesis that demonstrates potential to undertake graduate-level research in art history, and a personal statement of 1,000 words describing their intellectual development, academic interests, and career goals. The statement must name the University of Iowa faculty member under whose guidance the applicant hopes to work and indicate how that faculty member's area of expertise, or how the art history program is especially suited to the applicant's interests and goals.

Applicants should consult the Art History Graduate Bulletin on the School of Art, Art History, and Design website. No separate application is necessary for scholarships or teaching/research assistantships for applicants.

Graduate Admissions notifies all applicants by mail of admission decisions.

Career Advancement

Many art and art history graduates pursue careers that match their degree specializations, such as commercial or graphic designer, conservation or museum curator or administrator, art educator, public artist, gallery and museum administration, art appraiser and restorer, or community art center coordinator or instructor.

The Pomerantz Career Center offers multiple resources to help students find internships and jobs.

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		
30 s.h. must be graduate level coursework; 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 3.50 is required. ^b		
Students work with their faculty advisor in a field of concentration and to determine appropriate coursework and sequence; when a student wants to focus on a topic that involves more than one field, the art history faculty strongly recommends that they work closely with faculty members in both fields.		
Students must earn a grade of B or above in semester-long courses (numbered 3000 or above) in five of the following distribution fields: African, Asian, ancient Mediterranean, medieval, Renaissance and Baroque, 18th- and 19th-century European, American, and modern/contemporary. These courses must be taken after completion of the BA degree.		
Students must attend at least six public lectures by visiting scholars in art history over the course of their enrollment as MA graduate students. Proof of attendance is provided by short (150-250 word) written responses turned in to the director of graduate studies within two weeks of the lecture.		
Hours		0
First Year		
Fall		
ARTH:4999	Capstone Seminar in Art History	3
ARTH:6020	Art History Colloquium ^c	1
ARTH:6XXX	Graduate Art Seminar ^d	3
Elective course ^e		3
Hours		10
Spring		
ARTH:6020	Art History Colloquium ^c	1
ARTH:6XXX	Graduate Art Seminar ^d	3
Elective course ^e		3
Hours		7
Second Year		
Fall		
ARTH:6020	Art History Colloquium ^c	1
ARTH:6XXX	Graduate Art Seminar ^d	3
Elective course ^e		3
Language Proficiency Exam ^f		
Hours		7
Spring		
Qualifying Paper ^g		
ARTH:6020	Art History Colloquium ^c	1
ARTH:6XXX	Graduate Art Seminar ^d	3
Elective course ^e		2
Exam: Master's Final Exam ^h		
Hours		6
Total Hours		30

- 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 Take each semester when enrolled in 9 s.h. or more or have a research or teaching assistant appointment; all students are encouraged to attend the colloquium.
- d Students should register for an art history seminar each semester during their first four semesters. Credit for graduate seminars may be applied toward the five distribution fields requirement.
- e Work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate graduate elective coursework and sequence.
- f Proficiency in languages is a prerequisite for engaging in archival and field research within the discipline of art history, and the faculty is committed to assisting students in their preparation for such specialized research. Each student is encouraged to collaborate with their faculty advisor to create a personalized strategy for acquiring language skills that will help them further their research agendas.
- g Students must complete a qualifying paper that demonstrates their ability to conduct scholarly research and convey ideas in writing appropriately for the discipline and the student's specialization field; preliminary qualifying paper due to the faculty advisor early in the final semester of the program.
- h Oral defense of the qualifying paper.