

Art History, Ph.D.

Requirements

The Doctor of Philosophy program in art history requires a minimum of 72 s.h. of graduate credit. Of the 72 s.h., at least 39 s.h. must be earned while registered in the UI Graduate College, after formal program admission. For details, see the Graduate College Manual of Rules and Regulations Section XII C. Students must maintain a cumulative g.p.a. of at least 3.50. They may count a maximum of 38 s.h. of work completed for the M.A. toward the Ph.D., excluding credit earned in language courses. Students are allowed only one semester of academic probation.

Students are expected to acquire great breadth and depth of knowledge in the discipline of art history, achieve a high level of expertise in a specialized field, and demonstrate professional speaking and writing skills. The program provides them with scholarly challenges, research skills, and mentoring necessary for professional development and successful careers.

Ph.D. students major in one of the following 10 distribution fields: African (including Oceanic), architecture, Asian, ancient (3000 B.C.E. to 300 C.E.), medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, 18th- and 19th-century European, American (including pre-Columbian, Native American, and African American), and modern/contemporary. Students also minor in two fields. The first minor must be in an art history distribution field that is not contiguous with the major field; the second may be in any art history distribution field or in a relevant discipline outside of art history, subject to the faculty's approval.

For more detailed information, consult the Art History Graduate Bulletin on the School of Art and Art History website.

Required Courses

Students must satisfactorily complete ARTH:4999 Capstone Seminar in Art History, even if they have completed a similar course at another institution (students who have completed the course for a master's degree or other previous work at Iowa are exempt). They must register for an art history seminar in their first three semesters of Ph.D. coursework (or in their fifth, sixth, and seventh semesters of graduate study), before the Ph.D. readings course and comprehensive exam.

They also must 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 may count up to 6 s.h. of credit earned for dissertation research toward the 72 s.h. required for the degree. Courses outside the curriculum of the School of Art and Art History's art history division do not carry art history credit.

Directed Studies

Normally, a maximum of 6 s.h. earned in ARTH:6040 Directed Studies may be applied toward the semester-hour requirement for the Ph.D., although doctoral students may petition the art history faculty for permission to apply up to 9 s.h.

Language Requirement

Students must demonstrate proficiency in French or German for admission to the Ph.D. program. They also must demonstrate proficiency in a second non-English language relevant to their research area by the end of their third semester of Ph.D. work or before their dissertation topic is approved. They may demonstrate proficiency by:

- completing two years of university-level coursework in the same language; or
- earning a grade of B or higher in a 3000-level advanced language course; or
- achieving at least an 80 percent proficiency score on the level five milestone of the relevant Rosetta Stone language program; or
- in exceptional circumstances, making a direct petition to the faculty after receiving the recommendation of their advisor.

Credit earned in language courses does not count toward the degree.

Ph.D. Committee

The Ph.D. committee consists of the student's dissertation advisor, who is responsible for the major field; two members responsible for the two minor fields; and at least two additional members. Of these five, four must be tenured or tenure-track faculty members from the art history division. One must be from outside the division and must be a member of the Graduate College faculty. When appropriate, committees may include additional members.

Comprehensive Examination

Upon completion of course requirements, the Ph.D. candidate takes three written comprehensive examinations. The major exam consists of six questions and lasts six hours; the two minor exams each consist of three questions and last three hours. The exams are taken on any three days within one week (Monday through Friday).

The scope of the comprehensive exams is determined in consultation with the candidate's degree committee supervisor and the committee members responsible for the two minor fields.

Oral Comprehensive Examination

Within approximately two weeks of completing the three written exams, the candidate meets with the degree committee for the oral comprehensive examination, which concentrates on questions that arise from the written comprehensive exams.

Dissertation Proposal

Each student must complete a publishable dissertation that makes an original contribution to the art history discipline and demonstrates evidence of superior understanding of critical issues in the candidate's chosen specialization field. As soon as possible after completing the comprehensive examinations, the candidate submits a dissertation proposal to the degree committee supervisor and subsequently to the degree committee.

The committee meets as a group with the candidate to discuss the dissertation proposal and to offer comments and suggestions. The proposal must be submitted to the committee at least two weeks before the approval meeting.

The proposal includes a 1-2 page abstract, a 10-15 page précis that includes a review of the state of the field, and a bibliography.

After the proposal has been approved by the committee, the candidate circulates an abstract to the entire art history faculty. The candidate must give a public presentation on the dissertation topic no later than the end of the semester following the degree committee's approval. The presentation is scheduled with the head of art history.

Final Examination

Upon completing a dissertation, the candidate meets with the Ph.D. committee for an oral defense of the dissertation. The oral defense constitutes the final examination for the Ph.D. degree. The successful completion of this examination normally marks the last stage in the candidate's fulfillment of requirements.