

UNIVERSITY of **HOUSTON**

SCHOOL of ART

Program Guide to
Graduate Study in
ART HISTORY

A ROBUST DEGREE WITH A THOROUGH GROUNDING IN ART HISTORY

The University offers a Masters of Arts in Art History (MA) degree. The degree is designed to allow students to customize their curriculum to suit their unique research interests. The MA degree in Art History provides a thorough grounding in the best practices of art historical research and writing with an introduction to a broad range of fields an expertise. We also provide opportunities in Curatorial Studies and Art Criticism and Writing to the interested student.

DYNAMIC ARTS CULTURE OF HOUSTON

The University of Houston School of Art offers a graduate degree in a rich arts environment with access to the vast resources of a premier research institution in a world-class cultural center. Here you will have significant opportunities to work with the museum curators, gallerists, critics, and working artists who make up the city's flourishing art scene. UH works with museums and galleries as an integral part of the graduate experience to supply students with internships, fellowships, and research opportunities. Many students will have the opportunity to take advantage of internship opportunities at various museums like the Blaffer, the Menil or the Museum of Fine Arts Houston while they work on their degrees.

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

School of Art

GUIDE to the MASTERS of ARTS in ART HISTORY

OVERVIEW

A core principle of the University of Houston's Art History graduate program is flexibility, making it both dynamic and interdisciplinary. The MA in Art History at the University of Houston provides the graduate student with a firm grounding in the discipline of art history coupled with the riches of major art institutions in a dynamic urban art world. The program is designed with a minimal number of required courses to give students the opportunity to design a program that best suits their individual needs and aspirations. In addition to art history, specializations are also available in Curatorial and Theoretical Practices or in Art Criticism and Writing, with thesis and non-thesis tracks in each.

Through its uniquely wide-ranging and diverse options for coursework and internships, the UH program enables students to pursue a large number of career options.

Graduates of the UH Master's program in art history will be well-prepared to go on to seek the Ph.D. in art history, or, alternatively, to pursue careers not requiring the Ph.D. in art museums, collections, or galleries; in art criticism and writing; or to combine additional credentials for a career in arts librarianship, arts management or art education.

Our expansive view of art history leads us to seek candidates with a variety of interests and backgrounds. Though applicants must demonstrate an understanding of art historical research and writing practices through a writing sample, an undergraduate degree in Art History is not required.

APPLICATION AND ADMISSION INTO THE PROGRAM

Applicants to the M.A. Program must submit the following:

- A completed Graduate Application form. Online application is available October 1st at www.applytexas.org . The completed online application is automatically sent to the University of Houston.
- Non-refundable School of Art Application fee (see online application for the amount). Applicants may pay with a credit card while applying online, or by check or money order payable to the University of Houston. See applytexas portal for more information.
- 1 official transcript from each college or university attended since high school (sent directly to the Office of Admissions from the schools, electronic is preferable).
- 1 unofficial transcript from each college or university attended since high school uploaded onto the application in pdf format as a SINGLE document.
- GRE Scores (sent electronically to the University of Houston – code 6870)
- 3 recommendations from those who are familiar with your academic work, at least one of which should concern your work in art history will be requested during the application process. Email addresses of references will be required at the time of application.
- A resume of academic and work experience. If applicable, include reading and/or speaking proficiency level in one or more foreign languages. It will be requested during the online process.
- Letter stating academic interests within the field of art history and career goals. It will be attached during the online submission.
- One sample of academic writing (7-20 pages) can be attached during the online application process. It should be formatted as a pdf.

Application Procedures for the MA in Art History: International Applicants

Applicants who are not citizens of the United States are considered international students by the University, regardless of residency or immigration status. International applicants must send materials to both the Office of International Admissions and to the School of Art.

In addition to completing the above process, send the following (all necessary forms are included with the International Application) to:

University of Houston

International Admissions
122 E. Cullen Building
Houston, Texas, 77204-2023
U.S.A.

- Completed International Student Graduate Application – online application can be found at www.applytexas.org. Please send all other materials, including the TOEFL Score and all transcripts, required for international application to the University of Houston.
- Non-refundable International Student Application Evaluation Fee (see online portal for amount). If payment is coming from outside the U.S., this must be in the form of an American Express money order or a draft from a U.S. bank.
- Non-refundable School of Art application fee. Applicants may pay with a credit card online during the application process or elect to send a check to the School of Art. A check or money order must be made payable to the University of Houston.

DEGREE COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS and GUIDELINES

UNIVERSITY Academic Requirements

Students are required to meet the requirements set forth in the Graduate and Professional Studies Catalog, which can be viewed on the University of Houston website: www.uh.edu. The major CLASS (College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences) requirements for graduation are:

1. 36 hours of course credit at the graduate level
2. GPA of 3.0 or higher
3. No more than 3 grades of C+ or lower. A student is automatically dropped from the program upon receipt of the Fourth grade lower than a B-. **This is known as the "Four "C" rule.**

PROGRAM Course Requirements

- I. A minimum of 36 graduate-level credits are required for the M.A. degree
- II. All MA students are strongly encouraged to pursue a broad background in art history outside of their thesis concentration area. These credits are distributed in the following manner:
 - a. Graduate Methods Seminar: 3 hours (taken 1st semester)
 - b. Graduate Readings and Historiography in a specific field (varies each year): 3 hours (taken 2nd Semester)
 - c. **Art History: 12 hours. All courses must be taught by tenured or tenure-stream faculty. Distribution Requirements: One art history course each from pre-1450, 1450-1850, and after 1850.**

Related Arts: 18 hours.

These graduate level courses may be a combination of art-history and non-art history courses to enrich their their understanding of the period. Courses here are not restricted to tenure and tenure-stream. We encourage relevant graduate work in Philosophy, **Literature, History, Women's Studies, Anthropology, Latino Studies, etc.**

If a student is writing a thesis, 6 hours will be applied to 'Related Arts'

Non-thesis track student will apply 3 hours of independent study here in preparation of question area topics and in-depth directed study with a faculty member.

Unless a language course is taken at a graduate level, it is taken BEYOND the 36 hours required. This can be done at UH or off campus.

Internship hours are applied as hours in related arts.

- III. A full-time course load as defined by the Graduate College is 9 credit hours.
 - a. in order to receive funding or maintain a position as a graduate assistant, a student must maintain full-time status.
- IV. As per University policy, only 9 hours of graduate credit can be applied as transfer credit. (<http://www.uh.edu/graduate-catalog/planning-the-graduate-program/transferred-courses/index.php>)
- V. **Auditing Classes: students may register to audit classes in addition to those they are taking for credit. This will give them the opportunity to broaden their base of knowledge without having to take the class for credit.**

GRADUATE STUDENT ADVISING

Prior to registration each semester, each student consults with his/her Faculty Advisor about the schedule. The Advisor will help students to evaluate the course offerings and assess their personal needs and goals.

At the end of the first year, ALL graduate students select their thesis (or curatorial) advisor in their primary subfield of interest to serve as their mentor. The faculty advisor **serves as chair of the student's Thesis or Curatorial Committee or M.A. Examination Committee**, discusses coursework with him/her and offers career counseling. The thesis topic must be worked out in consultation between the student and faculty advisor and determined prior to the Fall Semester of the second year. (see page 10 for more details)

FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

For most careers in art history, knowledge of foreign languages is essential. Much of the scholarship undertaken in addition to the primary sources are in languages other than English. Students preparing to apply for a Ph.D. will be required to have a reading knowledge of German in addition to another language: traditionally French, Italian or Spanish.

For this reason, students are required to demonstrate the capability to translate a scholarly passage from a foreign language. Student must demonstrate reading proficiency in a foreign language. There are several methods by which this can be satisfied:

1. Score of 550 or higher on the Graduate Student Foreign Language Test (GSFLT).
2. A grade of B or better in two graduate (6000-level) readings courses in the foreign language. A grade of B- will not be accepted.
3. Completion of beginning and intermediate college levels (four semesters) of foreign language with a grade of B or better in the last five years. (Placing out of beginning courses may be considered as fulfilling part of the requirement.) Two undergraduate courses plus a 300-word passage translation can also meet this requirement.
4. Certification of competency by the Art History Faculty through an translation examination of a discipline-specific text in the language 300 word translation.
5. For students whose native language is something other than English, a native speaker certification may be possible.

GENERAL COMPREHENSIVE QUALIFICATION EXAMS

At the end of the First Semester, all MA students will be required to take an objective exam, based on images and information covered in the Western Survey courses from Ancient through Modern (ARTH1301/1302). The students will be required to provide thorough identification and informed discussion on canonical works drawn from a textbook used in our classes.

TEXTS:

The Survey classes at the University of Houston are currently taught from Stokstad's *Art History*. We will draw our images from this text. We recommend consideration of other survey texts as well.

PASSING:

The student is required to score at least an 80% on the exam. If the student fails to do so, (s)he must take the exam again at the beginning of the Spring semester. When the student has passed the examination, this fact is recorded on the official transcript.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS:

There are 2 plans under which graduate students can earn a Master of Arts in Art History

- M.A. Plan I: 30 hours of coursework and 6 hours of approved thesis or curatorial project hours and written and defended thesis or curatorial project.
- M.A. Plan II: 33 hours of coursework and 3 hours of capstone examination preparation and examination satisfaction.

PLAN I: THESIS TRACK

The thesis track requires the completion of a thesis approved by three committee members. Two committee members must be from the Art History Faculty at the University of Houston. The thesis advisor is chosen during the Spring Semester of the first year. The members of the committee must be established by October 15th of the 3rd semester.

For those on the thesis track, the six hours of thesis credit count toward the 18 hours of Related Arts. The thesis may take the form of a written thesis or a curatorial project. During thesis preparation in the second year of the program, each student will meet periodically with his/her chosen **thesis director. You may choose as your director from the following faculty: Koontz, Nevitt, Steinhoff, Tejada, Zalman, Harren.**

A third committee member from outside the department may be chosen with consultation of your thesis director. This third committee member may be an expert in the field from outside of the University.

DECLARING A TOPIC AND ADVISOR:

Students will declare an advisor by APRIL 15th of the first year. At this point, (s)he will begin working directly with the advisor to prepare a prospectus and research plan to be submitted in October of the following year.

THESIS PROCESS and PROGRESS

During the Fall semester of the Second Year the student will work with their mentor to choose a committee that will complement the topic chosen. The purpose of the thesis committee is to serve as a resource of knowledge and feedback throughout the process not merely at the end. The sooner the student is in dialogue with these scholars the more beneficial this relationship becomes.

DEADLINES: The student will choose an The students will submit a 3-5 page prospectus that they have provided each of their committee members, giving a rough sketch of the topic. Along with this, the student will provide a formal sheet signed by the two required departmental readers and if desired the optional reader. This deadline is October 15th.

STEPS TOWARDS COMPLETION

The M.A. Thesis must be submitted in draft form to all members of the Thesis Defense committee at least one week before the Thesis Defense.

Graduate School guidelines (“Specifications”) must be used to prepare the M.A. Thesis.

The instructions for formatting can be found online:

<http://www.uh.edu/class/students/graduate/thesis-dissertation-info/index.php>

THESIS DEFENSE

In March or April of the Second year, the MA candidate will defend his/her work in both an open and closed forum. The defense process begins with a 30-40 minute presentation open to the public. This is followed by a private discussion with the candidate and the committee.

The Master’s Exam Report form, signed by the Graduate School Advisor, must be presented and signed at the Thesis Defense. At this point, the committee may choose to approve the candidate, disapprove or to send the candidate back for revision.

Before the defense, the student must prepare three (3) signature pages on 100% cotton paper. If the manuscript has been approved by the committee, the student and committee members should sign the signature pages at the time of the defense. After the defense has been successfully completed, prepare a review copy of the document on **regular copy paper for submission to the Dean’s office.** The procedure for organizing submission materials is explained below.

PLAN II: CAPSTONE EXAMINATION

The Plan II track student will take a series of exams over the course of two days which will be evaluated by a committee of three faculty members approved by the Graduate Program Director in Art History. This examination will normally be taken during the last semester of coursework. The decision to pursue this path will be made by the First Semester of the Second Year.

EXAM STRUCTURE

Over the course of two days, the student will take:

Day 1: 2 x 90 minute essays in the student's choice of 2 fields that make up the 3 broad areas also comprising MA course distribution requirements.

Day 2: 1 90-minute essay on the third area - again the student's choice from the two sub-areas

Area I (pre 1400): (a) Ancient; (b) Medieval; (c) Pre-Colombian

Area II (1400-1850): (a) Colonial Latin America; Baroque

Area III (1850-contemporary): (a) Modern (19th - 20th century); (b) Contemporary

CHOOSING A COMMITTEE:

The student cannot choose 2 fields that are taught by the same professor - eg Pre-Columbian and Colonial Latin America)

The student will notify the Graduate Student Advisor of the fields they have selected and the committee will be assembled. This must be done by October 15th of the second year.

EXAM PREPARATION:

The faculty in the areas the student has chosen will each put together a list of 10 sources (including books and articles) in that area for the student to read and on which the exam questions will be based.

Each faculty member will also put together a few samples of the types of questions they will offer as options on the exam. The questions will more likely be ones that ask the student to synthesize material and ideas than simply informational.

The student will also meet with each committee member to discuss the readings and make sure the student is on track in terms of the material and ideas they want the student to master. The number and frequency of meetings will be agreed upon by the faculty and student but will be no less than 3 times before the exam.

GRADUATE FACULTY in the ART HISTORY PROGRAM

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