

History of Art

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Undergraduate Program

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Overview

Art History examines the wide range of things that people have made and looked at and endowed with meaning -from the imposing facade of an imperial palace, to the colorful glory of stained glass or an oil painting, to an artist's intimate sketches. The discipline encompasses the study of painting, sculpture, decorative arts, the graphic media, and architecture, as well as an extensive variety of visual forms that run far afield of the traditional territory of "art" itself (for example, advertising, or ritual and ceremony, household furnishings, or popular entertainment). Students of art history become conversant with the world's cultures and develop skills in visual analysis in order to understand how images, objects, and built environments communicate. They also learn to employ a broad selection of interpretive methodologies.

Among the questions art historians ask are:

How do different cultures define art, the artist, and artistic quality?
How do people construct an argument in paint or stone?
How does one learn to look at and understand material objects produced by cultures other than one's own?
How does art define or undermine ethical and political values?
How does our understanding of a work change when it is removed from its original setting and placed in a private collection or a museum?
How can we come to understand our own visual environment in new, more complex ways?

The Department of the History of Art at the University of Michigan is distinguished by its long-standing commitment to the study of diverse cultures from around the world and its emphasis on the close analysis of the visual arts in relation to their historical and cultural contexts.

Many of our classes include field trips to museums and architectural sites, and hands-on work with original art objects and archival materials. Through careful work with original sources and a wide-ranging study of comparative cultures, our students learn to consider how art objects were understood in their own time and place, and how they continue to function in the contemporary world. In so doing, art history students become acute observers and interpreters of the visual environment.

Career Opportunities

A concentration or double-major in the History of Art combines the emphasis on critical thinking, research, problem-solving, written expression, and cultural literacy of a traditional liberal arts program with the discipline's unique attention to visual analysis. It thus provides an excellent general foundation for work in a range of careers which rely on visual literacy as well as training in the humanities. Such employment opportunities include work in business, law, education, and advertising as well as the visually oriented fields of mass media (one of our graduates is a Hollywood costume designer) and communications. A sharpening of one's capacities for observation and interpretation has also been of special benefit to students who go on to work in such fields as medicine or science.

An undergraduate degree in art history also prepares students for work in many arts-related fields. Graduates of our program have pursued careers not only in the specialized areas of museums, galleries, auction houses, art restoration, and university teaching and research, but also in arts administration, art therapy, design, criticism, journalism, publishing, libraries, computer and digital technology, and historic preservation.

For more information on careers in art history, please visit the department's Career Planning Resource Center in Tappan Hall.

The History of Art Concentration

The objectives of the undergraduate program are to encourage:

the ability to analyze works of art and their effects, both within their original settings and in subsequent contexts of reception

an understanding of relationships and distinctions between the visual cultures of diverse civilizations

an awareness of the social, religious, intellectual, and personal values that are embedded in art objects and other forms of visual culture

an understanding of -and the ability to engage with - a wide range of critical methodologies and theoretical perspectives

the ability to compare art and visual representation with other forms of human communication

an understanding of the relations between art history and other disciplines

an awareness of the impact of technology on the production, dissemination, and reception of art works and of visual culture in general

A Concentration in History of Art must include:

Prerequisites. Any two (2) course below the 300 level, one of which must be chosen from among the courses numbered in the 101-110 course sequence; the other from 100-299. One 100 level may be met through AP, upon approval by a HA advisor. Each prerequisite should, if possible, be from a different sub field or group, chosen from those listed below.

Concentration. A minimum of 27 credit hours; at least four (4) courses (or a minimum of 12 credits) must be at the 300- or higher level, and one of these must be a 3 credit Junior/Senior seminar which will focus on Comparative Studies, Theory, Methodology, or Museology. Three (3) courses (usually at the 200 or higher level) must meet the distribution requirements described below. Students are otherwise free to choose whatever they wish to make up their concentration.

Distribution requirements. Students take courses covering each of at least three (3) different geographical regions, and courses covering each of at least three (3) chronologically different periods

Geographical Areas	Chronological Categories
I. Western Asia and North Africa (Middle East and Central Asia)	1) Ancient
II. Sub-Saharan Africa	2) Medieval
III. Eastern Asia (China, Japan, India, Southwest Asia) and the Pacific	3) Early Modern (early Renaissance to late Baroque in European terms)
IV. Europe (east and west), with certain North American	4) Modern and Contemporary (18th C. or later)
V. the Americas and the Caribbean	

*eg., (3 courses=9 credit hours) I.1 =Ancient Near East; III.3= 15th-Century Chinese; IV .4= 19th- Century French

Cognates. Six (6) credit hours of 300 or higher level, preferably in fields related to the themes and materials of a student's area of focus in HA (eg. courses in ALC, CAAS, Classical Civilization, History, Romance Languages, or MARC). One course may be at a lower level if it is a studio/practicum course (eg., Chinese 225 "Calligraphy;" or a studio course taken in Art & Design or Architecture & Urban Planning or the RC; or certain internships,

approved by an undergraduate advisor in HA.

History of Art 393 (Junior Proseminar) is normally offered in the Winter Term only. It is required as a methodology seminar for junior concentrators who plan on pursuing a history of art degree with departmental honors. However, at the discretion of the honors advisor and the seminar instructor, other interested and qualified juniors and seniors may also participate in this course. It is required of honors concentrators and serves as preparation for the writing of the Honors Thesis during the senior year. (Please see the description of "The Honors Program" in the Handbook for Concentrators, pp. 4-5.)

There is no specific language requirement associated with the concentration program, but students are encouraged to acquire a reading knowledge of French and/or German for an advanced degree in art history.

Students concentrating in History of Art are requested to discuss their programs with a departmental concentration advisor at least once a year. Students who wish to earn history of art credit in a study abroad program must have the program pre-approved by the faculty advisor and provide course descriptions and other information at the request of the advisor. Once the student returns to the U-M campus, he or she must provide the HA faculty advisor with a syllabus, papers, and other work completed in the study abroad course. Students are encouraged to take advantage of the availability of departmental faculty advisors to discuss other issues as well, including academic interests, problems, goals, and career objectives.

UL WR (formerly ECB) courses: The History of Art department offers one upper-division course for Upper Level Writing Requirement (UL WR) credit each semester. Check the listing of UL WR -certified course offerings on the LS&A web site before registering.

The History Of Art Academic Minor

REQUIREMENTS FOR HISTORY OF ART MINOR: At least 15 credits (and five courses), to be chosen according to the following:

- 1. Required Survey Course:** one introductory course selected from the 100 level general sequence of departmental introductory survey courses-History of Art 101' 102' 103' 108.
- 2. Electives:** at least 12 credits of History of Art courses must be taken at the 200-level or above, with
 - a. At least two courses elected at the 300-level or above
 - b. And at least one seminar course (3 credits)

3. Distribution: The elective courses must cover at least two different geographical areas and at least two different chronological periods (See distribution grid in HA forms section, page 4)

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Credit for Internships and Study Abroad

Working on a case-by-case basis with an undergraduate advisor, students may arrange to receive course credit for internships in museums and other arts organizations. For internships, the usual procedure is to consult with a departmental advisor in advance to devise an appropriate set of assignments to document the work done. The student arranges with a faculty member to supervise the work as an independent study project, and signs a contract that describes the assignments to be completed. All students considering study abroad should consult the Office of International programs (G-513 Michigan Union).

Many concentrators enroll in the study-abroad programs sponsored by the University of Michigan, especially to study Italian art at the Villa Corsi-Salviati in Florence.

The department's Career Planning Resource Center maintains files on opportunities for internships and study abroad programs.

Honors

The Honors Program in History of Art provides a special opportunity for highly motivated students to work closely with faculty and with other honors students in the context of a small group seminar and then in the context of the research and writing of a thesis. The program is open to juniors and seniors who have an overall grade point average of 3.2 or higher and a concentration grade point average of 3.5 or higher. Students

wishing to be admitted to the program may pick up an application at the Student Services office.

Honors students work with a departmental advisor to devise a suitable schedule of courses. These include the Undergraduate Pro-seminar (History of Art 393) to be elected in the Winter Term of the Honors candidate's junior year. This Pro-seminar is designed to provide a forum for discussion of ideas and problems in the history of art, for the exploration of research methodologies in the field, and for gaining experience in scholarly writing and oral presentation.

The Honors program culminates with the writing of an Honors Thesis during the senior year. This research paper represents the results of the student's independent investigation of a topic chosen in consultation with a faculty advisor.

Resources and Special Opportunities

The University of Michigan offers several exceptional resources for art historians on campus. The Francis W. Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, housing ancient art and archaeological materials, and the University of Michigan Museum of Art are both important collections of original artifacts as well as active teaching institutions. History of Art classes frequently meet in the museums and students work directly with museum objects; opportunities also exist for students to assist with exhibitions and other museum programs.

The Fine Arts Library, housed in Tappan Hall, is a major research collection of books and periodicals from around the world in addition to up-to-date on-line and CD-ROM resources; the Eleanor Collins Visual Resource Collections is not only one of the best teaching collections of slides and photographs in the United States, but also contains significant research holdings in Asian art.

Other collections of interest to students include the extensive archives of prints, drawings, photographs, and maps at the William L. Clements Library of Americana and New World Studies, the Bentley Historical Collections specializing in the history of Michigan, and the Taubman Medical Library.

The Detroit Institute of Arts, the Toledo Museum of Art, the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village, and the Cranbrook Museums of Science and Art are within an hour's drive and frequently included in field trips. History of Art classes have also scheduled visits to special exhibitions in Cleveland, Chicago, and Washington, DC.

Kaleidoscope, the department's undergraduate association, sponsors a variety of activities such as films, museum trips, speakers, and social events. All History of Art concentrators are eligible to join; notices of meetings and events are posted on the bulletin board in the Tappan Hall lobby. The History of Art Career Planning Resource Center, located in Tappan Hall, maintains files of information on career options, internships, study abroad programs, graduate schools, Museum Studies programs, and fellowships.

High School Preparation

Students thinking of pursuing a concentration in the History of Art should develop their skills in writing and in foreign languages, and take as many History courses as possible. Some work in studio art is very helpful, as are internships and volunteer work with local arts organizations. Computer skills are especially useful for those who wish to work with digital images and other visual resources. The most valuable preparation of all, however, often takes place outside the classroom in visits to museums and works of public art and architecture.