History of Art

FROM STUDY TO SKILLS

All academic programs offered at the UM help students develop valuable transferable skills. In our increasingly visual world, the breadth of History of Art offers a vivid perspective on the course of human history through the study of works of painting, sculpture, architecture, decorative arts, and graphic media. As a History of Art concentrator you will be developing your global competence and visual literacy: the ability to read material artifacts as expressions of cultural beliefs, values, and practices, both in their original and subsequent contexts. As you gain familiarity with works of art and architecture from all over the world, you will learn to analyze the rhetoric and politics of visual culture and engage in sophisticated cultural historical analysis.

History of Art concentrators develop a broad range of abilities ranging from specific knowledge of artistic periods and artworks to visual literacy and well-honed research, writing, and communication skills. The program has close connections with many museums in the region, including the UM Museum of Art.


SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Visual Literacy and Analytical Skills
“Reading” images from a wide range of cultures
Understanding how objects communicate with the environment
Defining quality / weighing values
Thinking critically
Recognizing the school / period/artist of a work of art
Analyzing the artistic qualities of everyday objects
Understanding the impact of technology on the dissemination and reception of visual objects

Communication Skills
Writing and speaking effectively
Conveying complex information
Describing the impact of art
Presenting theories /ideas
Speaking to groups
Clarifying others’ thought and ideas
Helping others see the messages in our visual environment

Interpersonal / Cross-Cultural Skills
Developing visual sensitivity to a range of cultures
Understanding how the making of art has changed across time
Interpreting a culture’s values and beliefs
Explaining the present by understanding the past
Working in teams

Research /Project Skills
Working with primary sources
Using online image and archival databases
Gathering and analyzing information
Examining evidence
Organizing information / materials
Determining origins of artworks
Evaluating research results

BUILDING YOUR SKILLS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Employers seek out individuals who can demonstrate excellent verbal and written communication skills, teamwork and interpersonal skills, initiative, and a strong work ethic. Student organizations, campus employment, and study abroad offer valuable opportunities to add to the skills you are developing in your classes. Helicon, the History of Art student organization, sponsors a range of events and publishes the Helicon Review, a journal of student work. Other options include working as a docent or volunteering at area museums. Finally, a summer internship may be the best way of all to test out a career field and develop marketable skills; art history students typically find internships in museums and galleries, as well as in business, fashion, and media.
FROM SKILLS TO CAREER

History of Art concentrators develop both general and technical skills that serve as building blocks for a wide range of careers. For example, the ability to articulate the aesthetic and political impact of images may be equally useful whether working in journalism, marketing, or a museum. Many concentrators go on to graduate or professional school. The list below is a sample of careers undertaken by Art History graduates.

Visual Literacy and Analytical Skills

- Graphic artist/layout editor
- Photographer
- Documentary editor
- Set designer
- Picture researcher (film or publishing)
- Exhibit designer
- Curator, museum and freelance
- Architect
- Advertising executive
- Art dealer
- Art gallery director
- Appraiser
- Corporate arts adviser
- Web designer
- Online archivist
- Design consultant/interior designer
- Arts consultant
- Conservator/restorer
- Fine arts handler

Communication Skills

- Public relations specialist
- Art critic
- Museum educator
- Arts writer/reporter
- Book/journal/magazine editor
- Arts Programmer (TV/radio)
- Volunteer coordinator
- Educational coordinator
- K-12 teacher
- College instructor
- Librarian
- Special education teacher
- Volunteer coordinator
- Educational coordinator
- K-12 teacher
- College instructor
- Librarian

Research/Project Skills

- Grants specialist
- Museum director
- Museum registrar
- Museum development officer
- Arts council director
- Archivist
- Records manager
- Corporate history preservation officer
- Registrar of historic places
- Director, municipal parks and historic sites
- Operations supervisor
- Development officer
- Research associate
- Data analyst
- Legislative analyst
- Archaeologist
- Historic preservation officer

= Further Study Required

For more career information, see O*Net at http://online.onetcenter.org/

CONCENTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Within the field of Art History, there are many possible areas of specialization, by culture, time period, or medium. The concentration requires a minimum of 30 credit hours, with a minimum of four courses at the 300 level or higher, including at least one seminar. A 15-credit hour minor and an honors program are also available. The program encourages study abroad and participates in the Museum Studies minor, as well as the joint program in Classical Art and Archaeology. For more information, consult the department website below.

**Department of History of Art**
110 Tappan Hall
734-764-5400
www.lsa.umich.edu/histart

**Newman Advising Center**
1255 Angell Hall
734-764-0332
www.lsa.umich.edu/advising

**The Career Center**
3200 Student Activities Building
734-764-7460
www.careercenter.umich.edu
www.facebook.com/careercenter.umich
http://twitter.com/careercenter

On camp jobs (work-study and non work-study jobs) are listed at: https://studentemployment.umich.edu/JobX_Home.aspx

The Maize pages list hundreds of organizations for students to get involved in: http://studentorgs.umich.edu/maize

Volunteer Connection lists volunteer opportunities in local organizations: http://volunteer-connection.umich.edu/

NEXT STEPS / RESOURCES

To learn more about museum internships and careers in art history, visit: http://www.lsa.umich.edu/histart/resources

To begin connecting to professionals in fields that interest you, create your own LinkedIn account: http://blog.careercenter.dsa.umich.edu/2010/01/06/how-to-get-started-on-linkedin/

To identify internships or job opportunities, visit Career Center Connector: www.careercenter.umich.edu/c3student/

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