Art History

Department Website: http://arthistory.uchicago.edu

Program of Study

The study of art history encompasses the visual art, architecture, and material culture of a wide range of regions and historical periods. Art history courses develop students' skills in visual analysis, interpretation of images and texts, use of historical sources, and engagement with scholarly debates. So conceived, the study of art is an element of a general, liberal arts education; the skills of analytical thinking, logical argument, and clear verbal expression necessary to the program are basic to most fields. While maintaining the University of Chicago's traditional emphasis on the life of the mind, the program in art history prepares students for advanced study at the graduate level as well as for a wide array of careers involving visual acuity, design, research, and analysis.

Within the Art History Department, courses at the 10000-level meet the general education requirement in the arts. These courses may not be taken for credit toward the major, although majors are strongly encouraged to take at least one (1) to meet their general education requirements. Upper-level courses (20000-level) may take a relatively broad or narrow approach to particular periods, places, themes, or issues, or may deal with theoretical questions. The usual prerequisite for 20000-level Art History courses is consent of instructor or any 10000-level course in Art History or Visual Arts.

General Education Courses

Any of these 10000-level courses is an appropriate choice for any undergraduate to meet the general education requirement in the arts. None presuppose prior training in art.

Introduction to Art

ARTH 10100 Introduction to Art develops basic skills in the analysis and critical enjoyment of a wide range of visual materials. Issues and problems in the making, exhibition, and understanding of images and objects are explored through classroom discussion of key works, critical reading of fundamental texts, visits to local museums, and writing.

Survey Courses

• ARTH 14000 through 16999 - discuss major monuments of world art and architecture in the context of broad chronological and geographic categories and in relation to broad questions concerning the role art plays in individual, societal, and institutional settings.
• ARTH 14000 through 14999 - address Western art in Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance.
• ARTH 15000 through 15999 - address Western art from the early modern period to the present day.
• ARTH 16000 through 16999 - address the art of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and/or the Middle East.

Art in Context Courses

• ARTH 17000 through 18999 - introduce students to a well-defined issue, topic, or period of art in depth; at the same time, these courses explore issues of creativity, communication, and value in a series of concrete case studies.

Students who have taken at least one course in art history or studio art, or who have equivalent nonacademic experience, may elect to take an advanced lecture course, numbered from 20100 to 28999. The usual prerequisite is consent of instructor or any 10000-level course in art history or visual arts. The 20000-level art history courses investigate the arts of specific periods and places from a variety of perspectives. Some courses embrace large bodies of material defined by national culture; others follow developments in style, iconography, and patronage as they affect works in selected media.

Major in Art History

The BA in Art History furnishes students with a broad knowledge of art, including architecture, even as it provides an opportunity for the complementary, intensive study of an area of special interest. The basic components of the concentration are: a special field, devised in consultation with departmental instructors and the director of undergraduate studies; a distribution of courses outside the special field; at least two research papers in art history (emerging from ordinary course work in the department); and a third-year seminar on art-historical methods and issues. Fourth-year students who wish to pursue honors in the major conduct independent research on a topic of their own devising, producing an BA paper with the guidance of a faculty member and a graduate preceptor.

Program Requirements

Beginning with the Class of 2020, Art History majors will follow the requirements outlined below. Students in the Class of 2019 have the option of adhering to the new or to the old requirements. They should meet with the director of undergraduate studies to address their options and any questions or concerns. Note: The new requirements do not apply to students who will be in their final year in 2017–18.

All Art History majors are expected take at least one (1) course in Art History at the 10000-level to fulfill their general education requirement in the arts. Although general education courses do not count for the major, they are useful preliminaries to advanced work. It is, therefore, strongly recommended that students take such a course as early as possible in their undergraduate careers. Note: Students who have formally declared the major in Art History are guaranteed admission to 10000-level courses by notifying the instructor in advance.
The Standard Curriculum

The standard formula for requirements in the major goes by the sobriquet “4-3-2-1.” All Art History majors must complete the following:

- **Four (4) courses at the 20000-level to meet a distribution requirement** within the department. These courses shall be selected in consultation with the director of undergraduate studies. Courses should be selected for maximal geographical, chronological, cultural, and methodological diversity, and for minimal overlap with the Special Field.

- **Three (3) courses at the 20000-level in a Special Field.** Students develop the Special Field in consultation with departmental instructors and the director of undergraduate studies. Because Special Fields reflect the interests of individual students, they range widely in topic, approach, and scope. Reading courses with Art History faculty may be used to pursue specific questions within a Special Field. For more on the Special Field, see The Special Field below.

- **Two (2) courses at the 20000-level as free electives.** Any Art History courses at the 20000-level may satisfy this requirement. Courses outside the Department of Art History that relate directly to the Special Field are eligible to meet this requirement by petition to the director of undergraduate studies.

- **ARTH 29600 Junior Seminar: Doing Art History.** Students are expected to take this course in the Winter Quarter of the third year. Students who wish to study abroad during that quarter must meet with the director of undergraduate studies no later than the beginning of their third year to work out an alternative program of study.

At least **two research papers** of 10–15 pages. See “Research Papers” below.

In all of the above cases, graduate seminars at the 40000-level may count toward requirements in the major. Students are advised, however, that such courses impose special burdens of time and expertise, and admission to them is typically only by explicit approval of the instructor and may involve various prerequisites.

Students wishing to pursue honors in the major have additional requirements, described below under Honors.

The Special Field

The Special Field is developed by the student in consultation with instructors and the director of undergraduate studies, and may take various forms. It may be defined with reference to a civilization, a chronological period, a nation-state, a cultural institution, or a suitable combination; it may be conceptual in character (e.g., art and the history of science, urban history, geography, gender and sexuality studies); it may combine historical, critical, and theoretical perspectives (e.g., politics and visual art in the twentieth century); it may be based in a particular medium or class of object (e.g., the built environment, tomb assemblages, or prints); it may combine historical and studio-practice courses (e.g., DoVA, CMST, TAPS, Music) to explore interrelations (e.g., art and dance). In many cases, courses outside Art History will be directly relevant to the Special Field; up to two such courses may be counted toward the major as free electives to complement the Special Field.

For those writing a BA paper, the topic normally develops from the Special Field and allows for further study in the Special Field through independent research and writing.

A proposal for the Special Field, in the form of a written petition, must be received by the director of undergraduate studies and approved no later than the end of a student’s third year. It is strongly recommended that students complete at least two courses in their Special Field by the end of their third year.

Junior Seminar

ARTH 29600 Junior Seminar: Doing Art History is designed to introduce the methods of art historical research. It is offered in Winter Quarter and required of Art History majors; if they wish, minors may take the course to satisfy a 20000-level course requirement. Majors or prospective majors who wish to study abroad during Winter Quarter of their third year must meet with the director of undergraduate studies, preferably in their first or second year and no later than the beginning of their third year, to work out an alternative program of study. Second-year Art History majors are permitted to enroll in the Junior Seminar with permission from the instructor and the director of undergraduate studies.

Research Papers

All Art History majors write at least **two research papers** of 10–15 pages. Students who wish to write a BA paper should complete this requirement before the beginning of their fourth year. A research paper can be:

- a paper written to fulfill a course assignment,
- the extension of a shorter course paper (either during the course or after its completion) to meet the page requirement, or
- a new paper on a topic chosen in consultation with the instructor.

The paper should include an analysis of existing scholarship and other relevant source materials. The paper should also draw on that scholarship and evidence to shape and support a thesis or argument of the student’s own devising. Formal analyses of works of art and analytic papers on materials assembled by the instructor do not qualify. On completion of a research paper, students must submit an approval form, signed by the course instructor, to the director of undergraduate studies. It is the student’s responsibility to obtain this signature and to submit the form. Approval forms are available on the Art History website (https://arthistory.uchicago.edu).
Honors

Art History majors who wish to pursue a BA with honors must complete the following requirements in addition to the standard curriculum. These students must register for the BA paper writing seminar (ARTH 29800 Senior Seminar: Writing Workshop) in Autumn Quarter of the fourth year. Writing the BA paper is a process that usually takes more than two quarters. Each student must secure the consent of an Art History faculty member who will serve as his or her adviser by the second week of Autumn Quarter (i.e., two quarters before the planned quarter of graduation). Working with a preceptor, students must then complete a BA paper by the second week of Spring Quarter of the fourth year. The BA paper is typically a 20- to 30-page research paper of original work that grows out of the Special Field. For more information, see BA Paper and Seminar.

To be eligible for honors in the major, students must complete both the BA seminar and the BA paper, and must have earned a major GPA of at least 3.5 and cumulative GPA of 3.3 at the time of graduation. Please note that completion of the BA paper does not, in itself, guarantee honors in the major. Honors are awarded by the College on the basis of a departmental nomination of exceptional BA papers.

BA Paper and Seminar

ARTH 29800 Senior Seminar: Writing Workshop is a workshop course offered in Autumn Quarter designed to assist students in writing and researching their BA papers. Students typically take the seminar in Autumn Quarter before graduating in Spring Quarter; students graduating in Autumn or Winter Quarter should take the course in the previous academic year. In the closing sessions of the seminar, students present their work-in-progress for the BA paper. They continue their research on the paper during the following quarters, meeting at intervals with their faculty BA advisor. Students have the option of taking ARTH 29900 Preparation for the BA Paper in Autumn or Winter Quarter to afford additional time for research or writing; this course is taught by arrangement between a student and his or her instructor. This course would be in addition to the 11 courses for the major.

A polished draft of the BA paper is due by Friday of ninth week of the quarter preceding graduation; the final version of the BA paper is due Monday of second week of the quarter of graduation. Both the draft and final version of the BA paper must be submitted in duplicate: one copy to the faculty advisor and the second to the director of undergraduate studies. Because individual projects vary, no specific requirements for the BA paper have been set. Essays typically range in length from 20 to 30 pages, but there is no minimum or maximum. Students should consult their BA advisor regarding all details, including optimal length, of the BA paper.

The BA paper is a substantial research paper that presents an original argument or develops original evidence about an intellectual problem. The paper should demonstrate the student’s capacity to formulate a serious research problem, develop a clear thesis, and substantiate the thesis on the basis of careful analysis of relevant evidence and measured consideration of competing views. The originality of the BA paper may lie in the discovery of evidence, a new, critical analysis of familiar claims, or the synthesis of materials. In keeping with guidelines set by the College, the Department of Art History only recommends papers that have earned the highest grade to the master of the Humanities College Division for consideration of departmental honors.

Double Majors and the BA Paper

Whether or not a single BA paper can satisfy requirements for a double major in Art History and another program is decided by the department on a case-by-case basis. Students should consult with the director of undergraduate studies. The criteria on which the decision is based include:

- the degree to which the resulting thesis is likely to speak from and to art history, even as it necessarily speaks from and to another field;
- the feasibility of the proposed advising arrangements for the proposed joint thesis; and
- the department’s estimation of the student’s track record for independent work that bodes well for writing a successful thesis while navigating between two majors.

Transferring Credit

No credit from Advanced Placement (AP) exams can be used in the major. Students who have studied at another college or university and for whom the College has approved transfer credit may apply to transfer up to four courses in art history to fulfill their major requirements. Approval is required from the director of undergraduate studies, who will review each course individually. Preference will be given to general and introductory courses. In the case of study abroad programs, and in any other case in which this is possible, students should meet with the director of undergraduate studies well in advance to discuss a course they wish to take. After completing the course, students should petition the director of undergraduate studies in writing for credit in the major. The petition must include a cover letter with the title and description of the course, as well as the name and location of the institution. To the cover letter should be attached a syllabus and a written record of the work the student did for the course.

The Office of the Dean of Students in the College must approve the transfer of all courses taken at institutions other than those in which students are enrolled as part of a direct enrollment study abroad program that is sponsored by the University of Chicago. Please note that it may be possible use such a course to meet requirements in the College but not in the major. For more information, visit the Transfer Credit page (http://collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/thecollege/transfercredit) of the Catalog.
Summary of Requirements for the Major

**MAJOR: Standard Curriculum**

Four (4) courses approved to meet the distribution requirement  

*   All courses must be at the 20000-level or higher.

Three (3) courses approved in a special field

Two (2) courses approved as electives

ARTH 29600  
Junior Seminar: Doing Art History

Two (2) 10- to 15-page research papers

Total Units  
1000

**MAJOR: Honors Curriculum**

Four (4) courses to meet the distribution requirement  

*   All courses must be at the 20000-level or higher.

Three (3) courses in a special field

Two (2) courses as electives

ARTH 29600  
Junior Seminar: Doing Art History

Two (2) 10- to 15-page research papers

ARTH 29800  
Senior Seminar: Writing Workshop

BA Paper  

Total Units  
1100

Advising

Art history majors should see the director of undergraduate studies no less than once a year for consultation and guidance in planning a special field, in selecting courses, and in choosing a topic for the BA paper if pursuing honors, as well as for help with any academic problems within the major. When choosing courses, students should refer to the worksheet available on the Art History website (https://arthistory.uchicago.edu). This form helps each student and the director of undergraduate studies monitor the student's progress in the program.

In order to keep an accurate record of students' progress to graduation, students will need to regularly provide a copy of the updated major worksheet to their College adviser for processing.

Recommendations for Art History Majors

1. Qualified undergraduate students in Art History may, with the express permission of the instructor, enroll in graduate seminars in the department. (These seminars are also open to non-majors with the same proviso.) For students interested in graduate study in Art History, it is advantageous to have performed well in a graduate seminar while completing the BA.

2. Students are urged to also pursue upper-level language courses. If a language course is relevant to a student's Special Field, the student may petition the undergraduate program chair to count it toward electives.

3. Those planning to continue their study of art history at the graduate level are advised to achieve language competency equal to at least two years of college study in French or German, or in the language(s) relevant for the geographic region that corresponds to their primary area of interest.

Grading

Art History majors must receive quality grades in courses taken for the major. ARTH 29900 Preparation for the BA Paper is open for P/F grading with consent of the instructor. Art History courses elected beyond program requirements may be taken for P/F grading with consent of the instructor. All courses taken to satisfy the general education requirement in the arts must receive quality grades. Nonmajors may select the P/F grading option with consent of the instructor if they are taking an Art History course that is not satisfying a general education requirement. A Pass grade is given only for work of C-quality or higher.

Minor Program in Art History

Beginning with the Class of 2020, Art History minors will follow the requirements outlined below. Students in the Class of 2019 have the option of adhering to the new or to the old requirements. They should meet with the director of undergraduate studies to address their options and any questions or concerns. Note: The new requirements do not apply to students who will be in their fourth year in 2017–18.

All Art History minors are encouraged take at least one (1) course in Art History at the 10000-level to fulfill their general education requirement in the arts. Although general education courses do not count for the minor, they are useful preliminaries to advanced work. It is, therefore, strongly recommended that students take such a course as early as possible...
in their undergraduate careers. Note: Students considering the minor in Art History and seeking admission to a 10000-level ARTH course may identify themselves to the instructor in advance.

The formula for requirements in the minor goes by the sobriquet “3-and-3”:

- All Art History minors take three (3) courses at the 20000-level to meet a distribution requirement within the department. These courses shall be selected in consultation with the director of undergraduate studies. Courses should be selected for maximal geographical, chronological, cultural, and methodological diversity, and for minimal overlap with the Special Field.

- All Art History minors take three (3) courses at the 20000-level in a Special Field. Students develop the Special Field in consultation with departmental instructors and the director of undergraduate studies. Because Special Fields reflect the interests of individual students, they range widely in topic, approach, and scope. Reading courses with Art History faculty may be used to pursue specific questions within a Special Field. For more on the Special Field, see The Special Field.

In all of the above cases, graduate seminars at the 40000-level may count toward requirements in the minor. Students are advised, however, that such courses impose special burdens of time and expertise, and admission to them is typically only by explicit approval of the instructor and may involve various prerequisites.

In one of the courses, students also write one research paper of about 10–15 pages on a topic chosen with and guided by the instructor, by individual arrangement at the start of the quarter. Minors may elect to take ARTH 29600 Junior Seminar: Doing Art History with the majors; if they do, they will research and write an essay on a topic of their choice instead of preparing a BA paper proposal.

Students who elect the minor program in Art History must meet with the director of undergraduate studies before the end of Spring Quarter of their third year to declare their intention to complete the minor. Students choose courses in consultation with the director of undergraduate studies. The director's approval for the minor program should be submitted to a student's College adviser by the deadline above on a form available on the Art History website (https://arthistory.uchicago.edu).

Courses in the minor may not be double counted with the student's major(s), other minors, or general education requirements. Courses in the minor must be taken for quality grades, and more than half of the requirements for the minor must be met by registering for courses bearing University of Chicago course numbers.

The Special Field

The Special Field is developed by the student in consultation with instructors and the director of undergraduate studies and may take various forms. It may be defined with reference to a civilization, a chronological period, a nation-state, a cultural institution, or a suitable combination; it may be conceptual in character (e.g., art and the history of science, urban history, geography, gender and sexuality studies); it may combine historical, critical, and theoretical perspectives (e.g., politics and visual art in the twentieth century); it may be based in a particular medium or class of object (e.g., the built environment, tomb assemblages, or prints); it may combine historical and studio-practice courses (e.g., DoVA, CMST, TAPS, Music) to explore interrelations (e.g., art and dance).

Summary of Requirements for the Minor in Art History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three (3) courses at the 20000-level to meet the distribution requirement</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three (3) courses at the 20000-level in a special field</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One (1) 10- to 15-page research paper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Units: 600

* One of the courses may be ARTH 29600 Junior Seminar: Doing Art History. Students in the minor would research and write an essay on a topic of their choice instead of preparing an honors paper proposal.

Minor Program in Architectural Studies

Beginning with the Class of 2020, Art History minors will follow the requirements outlined below. Students in the Class of 2019 have the option of adhering to the new or to the old requirements. They should meet with the director of undergraduate studies to address their options and any questions or concerns. Note: The new requirements do not apply to students who will be in their fourth year in 2017–18.

The minor in architectural studies combines course work in Art History, which equips students to analyze the form and changing history of the built environment in diverse cultures, places, and times, with up to three courses on architectural or urban topics offered in any department. Thus the minor enables students to enrich art historical analysis with methods from other disciplines. A student might choose to minor in architectural studies because the student is interested in the built environment—the inescapable setting of our lives—from a liberal arts perspective or because the student is considering applying to architecture school. The minor could represent an interest distinct from the student's major or it could complement a major in the social sciences or humanities by exploring the material setting of history and social life or the context for works of literature, film, music, or drama. It could equally complement a major in the sciences, such as medical fields, ecology, geology, physics, or mathematics.
Prospective minors need to meet with Art History’s director of undergraduate studies before the end of the third year to discuss their interests and course plans and obtain the director’s advice and approval. Together the student and director will fill out the Minor Program Application Form listing the intended courses, which the director signs. The student should download the form from the Art History website (https://arthistory.uchicago.edu) and submit the completed, signed version to his or her College adviser before the end of the third year.

Requirements

The minor in architectural studies requires a total of six courses at the 20000-level chosen in consultation with the director of undergraduate studies, all of which must either focus on the built environment or permit the student to devote the assignments or papers to the built environment. A minimum of three courses must be in the Department of Art History. The additional three courses may be taken in Art History or in other departments or programs. Some of the programs that may offer relevant courses are Geographical Studies, Visual Arts, History, English Language and Literature, Anthropology, and Environmental Studies. In one of the courses, students also write one research paper of about 10 to 15 pages on a topic chosen with and guided by the instructor, by individual arrangement at the start of the quarter.

Minors are strongly encouraged to take the Art History course Introduction to the Built Environment when available. Minors may elect to take ARTH 29600 Junior Seminar: Doing Art History, for which they would research and write an essay on a topic of their choice instead of preparing a BA paper proposal. This option is particularly suitable for minors interested in doing graduate work in architectural history.

Graduate seminars at the 40000-level may count toward requirements. Students are advised, however, that such courses impose special burdens of time and expertise, and admission to them is typically only by explicit approval of the instructor and may involve various prerequisites.

Contact the director of undergraduate studies in Art History if you have questions about whether a course may be counted toward the architectural studies minor.

Courses in the minor may not be double counted with the student’s major(s) or with other minors. Courses in the minor must be taken for quality grades, and more than half of the requirements for the minor must be met by registering for courses bearing University of Chicago course numbers.

Summary of Requirements for the Minor in Architectural Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three (3) courses at the 20000-level in ARTH focusing on the built environment</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three (3) courses at the 20000-level in ARTH or other departments focusing on the built environment</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One (1) 10- to 15-page research paper written for one of the six courses in the minor</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* One of the courses may be ARTH 29600 Junior Seminar: Doing Art History. Students in the minor would research and write an essay on a topic of their choice instead of preparing an honors paper proposal.

The following faculty members in Art History specialize in architectural history: Niall Atkinson, Wei-Cheng Lin, and Katherine Fischer Taylor. Many other faculty members in Art History have an interest in the built environment and will support students writing papers on architecture; students are welcome to ask their instructors.

A frequently updated list of courses that can count for the minor in architectural studies is available on the Art History website. For more information about the minor in architectural studies, please contact the director of undergraduate studies in Art History at arth-dus@lists.uchicago.edu.
Font Notice

This document should contain certain fonts with restrictive licenses. For this draft, substitutions were made using less legally restrictive fonts. Specifically:

Times was used instead of Trajan.

Times was used instead of Palatino.

The editor may contact Leepfrog for a draft with the correct fonts in place.