ART HISTORY

Degree Types: PhD

The Department of Art History offers a full-time doctoral program that is designed to prepare our graduates for professional lives as art historians and theorists of visual and spatial cultures. Coursework is for students with a solid undergraduate grounding in the field, and moves from a general, introduction to the methods and philosophies of the discipline to a more specific exploration of the student’s chosen field. Graduates are primarily trained for teaching careers, but many alumni have had considerable success in the museum field.

The faculty is renowned for its forward-looking, often transregional scholarship, with particular strengths in Black Visual Culture in the United States and African Diaspora; Modern and Contemporary art and architecture across the globe; Middle Eastern and North African art and visual culture; and European art and architecture from the early modern period through the 19th-century.

The department’s comparative and transdisciplinary orientation offers ample opportunity for innovative research, which is amplified by programs and clusters across the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences (WCAS) and within The Graduate School (TGS). Students in this program are encouraged to participate in TGS’s Interdisciplinary Cluster Initiative program.

Our highly ranked program is designed to make the most of our local resources, from courses at neighboring universities to holdings in Chicagoland libraries including the Newberry and Ryerson Libraries. The Chicago Objects Study Initiative, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, brings together scholars from Northwestern, the University of Chicago, and the Art Institute of Chicago (AIC) via shared programming that includes first-year graduate student coursework, internships and fellowships, and symposia open to a wider Chicago audience. Graduate students also garner experience working within departments at other local museums, including the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago and Northwestern’s own Mary & Leigh Block Museum of Art.

Additional resources:

- Department website (https://www.arthistory.northwestern.edu/)
- Program handbook(s)

Degrees Offered

- Art History PhD (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/tgs/art-history/art-history-phd/)

Art History Courses

ART_HIST 310-1 Ancient Art: Greece (1 Unit)
Art and architecture of Greece from the prehistoric Aegean to the Hellenistic periods.
Prerequisite: 200-level art history course.
Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 310-2 Ancient Art: Rome (1 Unit)
Art and architecture of the Roman world from Etruscan forerunners to the High Empire.
Prerequisite: 200-level art history course.
Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 320-2 Medieval Art: Early Medieval (1 Unit)
Art and architecture of the Europe from late antiquity to the twelfth century.
Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 329-0 Special Topics in Medieval Art (1 Unit)
Content varies depending on the expertise of the instructor and may engage with exhibitions and museums in Chicago and beyond. Past topics have included the early Christian church; history of illuminated manuscripts; pilgrimage and saints’ cults; the cathedral; Spain; art and crusade.

ART_HIST 330-1 Early Modern European Art 1400–1500 (1 Unit)
Painting, sculpture, architecture, and the graphic arts in Europe from 1400–1500.
Historical Studies Foundational Discipline Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ART_HIST 330-2 Early Modern European Art 1500–1600 (1 Unit)
Painting, sculpture, architecture, and the graphic arts in Europe from 1500–1600.
Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 339-0 Special Topics in 17th & 18th Century Art (1 Unit)
Content varies depending on the expertise of the instructor and may engage with exhibitions and museums in Chicago and beyond. Past topics have included the art of Diego Velázquez, marble sculpture, and the transatlantic Dutch world.

ART_HIST 340-1 19th Century Art 1: 1789–1848 (1 Unit)
Survey of European painting, sculpture, photography, and/or architecture from 1789 to 1848.
Global Perspectives on Power, Justice, and Equity Historical Studies Distro Area Historical Studies Foundational Discipline Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ART_HIST 340-2 19th Century Art 2: 1848–1914 (1 Unit)
Survey of European painting, sculpture, photography, and/or architecture from 1848 to 1914.
Global Perspectives on Power, Justice, and Equity Historical Studies Distro Area Historical Studies Foundational Discipline Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ART_HIST 350-0 Special Topics in 19th Century Art (1 Unit)
Content varies depending on the expertise of the instructor and may engage with exhibitions and museums in Chicago and beyond. Past topics have included European colonialism in Egypt, Haussmann’s Paris, and Mary Cassatt.

ART_HIST 360-1 20th Century Art 1 (1 Unit)
Painting, sculpture, architecture, design, and visual culture of the 20th century. 1900–1945.
Global Perspectives on Power, Justice, and Equity Historical Studies Foundational Discipline Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ART_HIST 365-1 Art of the United States 1 (1 Unit)
Survey of the arts and visual culture in the United States, encompassing architecture, painting, sculpture, photography, prints, film, and popular culture from colonial times to the Civil War.
Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 365-2 Art of the United States 2 (1 Unit)
Survey of the arts and visual culture in the United States, encompassing architecture, painting, sculpture, photography, prints, film, and popular culture after the Civil War.

**Literature Fine Arts Distro Area**

**ART_HIST 366-0 Contemporary Art (1 Unit)**
In-depth study of the art of the late 20th and early 21st centuries as seen from a global perspective and with attention to concurrent developments in critical theory.

**ART_HIST 367-0 Special Topics in Art of the United States (1 Unit)**
Content varies depending on the expertise of the instructor and may engage with exhibitions and museums in Chicago and beyond. Past topics have included nationalism and internationalism in US art; the myth of the US, the artist in society; elite and popular visual traditions.

**ART_HIST 369-0 Special Topics in 20th and 21st Century Art (1 Unit)**
Content varies and may coincide with local exhibitions; for example, art and activism; utopia and dystopia in recent practice; participatory art; video art; art criticism; globalization; visual cultural studies; photography in/as art; installation art; truth and fiction in recent practice.

**ART_HIST 370-1 Modern Architecture and Design (1 Unit)**
The history and theory of architecture, especially in relation to cities and landscape, from 1750 to 1900.

**ART_HIST 370-2 Contemporary Architecture and Design (1 Unit)**
The history and theory of architecture, especially in relation to cities and landscape, after 1900.

**ART_HIST 378-0 The Global City (1 Unit)**
A critical examination of the city as a socioeconomic system; period and regions of focus vary.

**ART_HIST 379-0 Special Topics in Modern and Contemporary Architecture (1 Unit)**
Content varies depending on the expertise of the instructor and may engage with exhibitions and museums in Chicago and beyond. Past topics have included the Burnham plan of Chicago, World’s Fairs, and architectural exchanges in the Global South.

**ART_HIST 380-1 Buddhist Art (1 Unit)**
Focused study of Buddhist art made in Tibet and neighboring countries. Art of the Imperial period (7th-9th centuries) through the end of the 14th century, including regional developments in western Tibet.

**ART_HIST 382-1 Chinese Painting (1 Unit)**
In-depth study of painting in China with consideration of formal and historical developments.

**ART_HIST 384-0 Art of the African Diaspora (1 Unit)**
Art of the African-descended cultures of North and South America, the Caribbean, or the wider globe.

**ART_HIST 389-0 Special Topics: Arts of Asia and the Middle East (1 Unit)**
Content varies for example, aspects of painting in the Indian subcontinent: Mughal and Rajput; issues of gender and sexuality in Japan and China from the 18th through 20th century; art in/about the Middle East.

**ART_HIST 401-1 Methods and Historiography of Art History (1 Unit)**
Investigation of philosophical or methodological approaches of current interest in art history. Required introduction to approaches in the discipline of art history; for students in the fall quarter of the first year.

**ART_HIST 403-0 Objects and Material Seminar (1 Unit)**
Material-based, close engagement with art objects in Chicago collections and the methods such activity requires.

**ART_HIST 405-0 Art Historical Research (1 Unit)**
On-site summer course required of first year students and open to others across the Humanities. Introduces students to various tools necessary to conduct on-site research through focused study in sites relevant to faculty expertise, for example, e.g., Paris, London, Shanghai, Kingston, Moscow, Madrid, Cape Town, Beirut, etc.

**ART_HIST 406-0 Dissertation Prospectus (1 Unit)**
Required of (and limited to) students in the spring quarter of the 3rd year. Walks the student through the mechanics of a dissertation proposal and designing a dissertation.

**ART_HIST 410-0 Studies in Ancient Art (1 Unit)**
Content varies. Recent offerings include aniconism; ornament; and the reception of antiquity.

**ART_HIST 420-0 Studies in Medieval Art (1 Unit)**
Content varies. Recent offerings include the global turn; cultural exchange in Medieval Europe; and the patron’s part.

**ART_HIST 430-0 Studies in Early Modern Art (1 Unit)**
Content varies. Recent offerings include art & technology; maps and the early modern transatlantic world; Aby Warburg/Atlas; thinking with stones in early modern Europe (at the Newberry Library).

**ART_HIST 440-0 Studies in 17th & 18th Century Art (1 Unit)**
Content varies. Recent offerings include print revolutions; architecture and space in the Spanish Habsburg world; and art and science.

**ART_HIST 450-0 Studies in 19th Century Art (1 Unit)**
Content varies. Recent offerings include world’s fairs; William Morris: Art, Design, Politics, Ecology; William Blake and abolitionism; and art and technology.

**ART_HIST 460-0 Studies in 20th & 21st Century Art (1 Unit)**
Content varies. Recent offerings include Picasso; shadow histories of photography; futures we will have loved; appropriation; aesthetics of socialist realism; black ontologies; speculation and the speculative; the Russian avant-garde, and art of the global 1960s.

**ART_HIST 470-0 Studies in Architecture (1 Unit)**
Content varies. Recent offerings include Louis Sullivan and Chicago architecture, architecture in America (1890-1930), the World City c. 1900, and French architecture (1830-1870).

**ART_HIST 480-0 Studies in Asian Art (1 Unit)**
Content varies. Offerings include the role of sketching in the Chinese artists’ practice, collecting Asian art under colonialism, Buddhist painting, and gender issues in East Asian prints.

**ART_HIST 496-0 Internship in the Arts (1 Unit)**
Direct participation in the regular activities of an established arts organization in the Evanston/Chicago area under the supervision of a faculty member. By petition to instructor, on a limited basis.

**ART_HIST 498-0 Graduate Tutorial (1 Unit)**
Supervised studies in the history of art. Content and course requirements vary. Pass/no-credit permitted at the discretion of the graduate advisor.

**ART_HIST 499-0 Independent Study (1 Unit)**
Permission of instructor and department required. May be repeated for credit.
ART_HIST 590-0 Research (1-3 Units)
Independent investigation of selected problems pertaining to thesis or dissertation. May be repeated for credit.