Art History

Art history studies the world’s arts and architecture from antiquity to the present. It analyzes visual objects from multiple perspectives, including their aesthetic and historical contexts, use of technology, relationship to science, ideological or social function, and visual and spatial characteristics. It studies individual artists or makers, cultural institutions, audiences, and intercultural exchanges. Because the field is inherently interdisciplinary, it often engages anthropology, philosophy, political science, history, literature, film, performance, theater, and theories of race, gender, class, and sexuality.

The study of art history provides knowledge of geographically and historically diverse artworks and related cultural practices. Departmental course offerings explore these works and practices with varying intensity and specialization. The major is an essential platform for those interested in the classic art history careers. (Curatorial work in museums normally requires at least a master’s degree, and college and university teaching and research require a Ph.D.) With its liberal arts emphasis on informed and critical reading, writing, speaking, and looking, and with its broad historical, cultural, geographic, and methodological range, the major also offers an excellent foundation for specialization in law, medicine, business, international relations, politics, education, and other areas. The Department of Art History offers a major and a minor.

All majors are assigned a departmental advisor. They are required to confer with their departmental adviser or the Director of Undergraduate Studies at the start of the academic year and are encouraged to do so before each registration period. Those wishing to petition to graduate or to transfer credits must see the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

Programs of Study

- Art History Major (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/art-history/art-history-major)
- Art History Minor (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/art-history/art-history-minor)

ART_HIST 101-6 First-Year Seminar (1 Unit) WCAS First-Year Seminar

ART_HIST 210-0 Introduction to Art History (1 Unit) Conceptual introduction to the problems and methods of art history. Introduces professors and their areas of expertise as well as fundamental concepts, monuments, and objects in art history. Historical Studies Distro Area Interdisciplinary Distro - See Rules (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/#schoolrequirementstext) Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 220-0 Introduction to African Art (1 Unit) Thematic and historical survey of the major periods of art making in Africa; analysis of a few exemplary works. Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 222-0 Introduction to Art of the African Diaspora (1 Unit) Introduction to the visual and performance art of the African diaspora, including the Caribbean, Brazil, and the United States. Historical Studies Distro Area Interdisciplinary Distro - See Rules (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/#schoolrequirementstext) Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 224-0 Introduction to Ancient Art (1 Unit) Introduction to the art and architecture of the ancient Near Eastern, Egyptian, Aegian, Greek, and Rome worlds. Historical Studies Distro Area Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 225-0 Introduction to Medieval Art (1 Unit) Introduction to the art and architecture of the medieval Mediterranean from the late Antique, Byzantine, and Islamic periods through the early medieval, Romanesque, and Gothic artistic traditions. Historical Studies Distro Area Interdisciplinary Distro - See Rules (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/#schoolrequirementstext) Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 228-0 Introduction to Pre-Columbian Art (1 Unit) Introduction to pre-Columbian and Native American art and architecture, from tribal societies, such as the Iroquois, Mandan, and Kwakiutl, to complex states, such as the Aztec, Maya, and Inca. Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 230-0 Introduction to American Art (1 Unit) Survey of art and architecture in cultural context, from the art of conquest to contemporary production. Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 232-0 Introduction to the History of Architecture and Design (1 Unit) The theory and history of architecture in relation to cities and landscape; the history of design, 1850 to today. Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 235-0 Introduction to Latin American Art (1 Unit) Survey of the work of artists and groups from throughout the various countries of Central and South America from colonial times to the present. Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 240-0 Introduction to Asian Art (1 Unit) Introduction to the art and architecture of Asia from ancient cultures to contemporary developments, including religious, court, and popular genres. Depending on the instructor, this course covers South/Southeast Asia or East Asia. Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 250-0 Introduction to European Art (1 Unit) Leading centers and artists of Europe from the later Middle Ages to the 19th century. Architecture, sculpture, painting, and graphic arts in relation to their social and cultural settings. Historical Studies Distro Area Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 255-0 Introduction to Modernism (1 Unit) Conceptual introduction to modernism, covering art and visual culture from the late-19th century to the mid-20th century, with a focus on Europe and the United States. Historical Studies Distro Area Interdisciplinary Distro - See Rules (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/#schoolrequirementstext) Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 260-0 Introduction to Contemporary Art (1 Unit) Conceptual and thematic introduction to art since the 1960s, with attention to the impact of new technologies, social and political change, globalization, and the ongoing transformation of artistic production and distribution. Historical Studies Distro Area Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 310-1 Ancient Art: Greece (1 Unit) Art and architecture of the Ancient Greco-Roman world. 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 (1 Unit) Art and architecture of the Ancient Greco-Roman world. 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 318-0 Exhibiting Antiquity: The Culture and Politics of Display (1 Unit)  Examination of the construction of Mediterranean antiquity through modes of reception since 1750. Analysis of programs of collecting and display and the intersection of institutional and scholarly agendas. ART_HIST 318-0, CLASSICS 397-0 and HUM 397-0 taught together; may receive credit for only 1 of these courses. Historical Studies Distro Area Interdisciplinary Distro - See Rules (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/ #schoolrequirementstext) Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 319-0 Special Topics in Ancient Art (1 Unit)  Content varies-for example, picturing the gods; monument and commemoration in antiquity; narrative in ancient art; and the Roman provinces. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course.

ART_HIST 320-1 Medieval Art Byzantine (1 Unit)  Art and architecture of the Middle Ages. Byzantine. Historical Studies Distro Area Interdisciplinary Distro - See Rules (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/ #schoolrequirementstext) Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 320-2 Medieval Art: Early Medieval (1 Unit)  Art and architecture of the Middle Ages. Early medieval. Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 320-3 Medieval Art: Late Medieval (1 Unit)  Art and architecture of the Middle Ages. Late medieval. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course. Historical Studies Distro Area Interdisciplinary Distro - See Rules (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/ #schoolrequirementstext) Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 329-0 Special Topics in Medieval Art (1 Unit)  Content varies-for example, the early Christian church; history of illuminated manuscripts; pilgrimage and saints' cults; the cathedral; Spain; art and crusade. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course.

ART_HIST 330-1 Renaissance Art c. 1300-1550 (High Renaissance) (1 Unit)  Painting, sculpture, architecture, and the graphic arts in Europe from c.1300-1550 (High Renaissance). Prerequisite: 200-level art history course. Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 330-2 Renaissance and Mannerism: Southern European Art 1400-1600 (1 Unit)  Painting, sculpture, architecture, and the graphic arts in Southern Europe from 1400-1600. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course. Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 330-3 Renaissance and Mannerism: Northern European Art 1400-1600 (1 Unit)  Painting, sculpture, architecture, and the graphic arts in Northern Europe from 1400-1600. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course. Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 339-0 Special Topics in Renaissance and Mannerist Art (1 Unit)  Content varies-for example, the art of Bosch and Brueghel, the history of collecting; art at court; portraiture; gender and representation. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course.

ART_HIST 340-1 Baroque Art: Southern Europe 1600-1700 (1 Unit)  Painting, sculpture, and the graphic arts in Southern Europe from 1600-1700. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course. Historical Studies Distro Area Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 340-2 Baroque Art: Northern Europe 1600-1700 (1 Unit)  Painting, sculpture, and the graphic arts in Northern Europe from 1600-1700. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course. Historical Studies Distro Area Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 349-0 Special Topics in Baroque Art (1 Unit)  Content varies-for example, French art of the 16th and 17th centuries; art and the New World; early modern prints and drawings; art and science. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course.

ART_HIST 350-1 19th Century Art 1: Late 18th Century-1848 (1 Unit)  Survey of European painting and sculpture. The late 18th century to 1848. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course. Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 350-2 19th Century Art 2: 1848-1900 (1 Unit)  Survey of European painting and sculpture. 1848-1900. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course. Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 359-0 Special Topics in 19th Century Art (1 Unit)  Content varies-for example, the art of Edouard Manet; orientalism; the spaces of 19th-century art; painting in the south of France. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course.

ART_HIST 360-1 20th Century Art 1 (1 Unit)  Painting, sculpture, architecture, design, and visual culture of the 20th century. 1900-1945. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course. Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 360-2 20th Century European Art (1 Unit)  Painting, sculpture, architecture, design, and visual culture of the 20th century. Post-World War II. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course. Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 365-1 American Art I (1 Unit)  Survey of the arts and visual culture in the United States, encompassing architecture, painting, sculpture, photography, prints, film, and popular culture. Colonial times to the Civil War. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course. Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 365-2 American Art II (1 Unit)  Survey of the arts and visual culture in the United States, encompassing architecture, painting, sculpture, photography, prints, film, and popular culture. Post-Civil War. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course. 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. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course.

ART_HIST 367-0 Special Topics in American Art (1 Unit)  Content varies-for example, nationalism and internationalism in American art; the myth of America; the artist in American society; elite and popular visual traditions. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course.

ART_HIST 368-0 Special Topics in Modern Art (1 Unit)  Content varies-for example, art of the Russian Revolution; the avant-garde; totalitarian art; art during war; modernism and its discontents; art and decolonization; medium specificity. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course.

ART_HIST 369-0 Special Topics in 20th 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. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course.

ART_HIST 370-1 Modern Architecture and Design (1 Unit)  The history and theory of architecture, especially in relation to cities and landscape. 1800 to present. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course. Literature Fine Arts Distro Area
ART_HIST 370-2 Modern Architecture and Design (1 Unit)  The history of design, 1850 to today. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course. Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 372-1 Japanese Art (1 Unit)  Survey of historical or media-specific art in Japan and Japanese culture, including, for example including painting, calligraphy, ceramics, architecture, sculpture, textiles, and gardens in religious and secular settings. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course. Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 375-0 Media Theory (1 Unit)  Comprehensive introduction from a humanistic perspective to theories about the nature of media and the role of technology in modern culture. ART_HIST 375-0 and HUM 225-0 are taught together; may not receive credit for both courses. Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 377-0 Architecture and Urbanism of the Global City in the 20th Century (1 Unit)  Critical examination of the modern city as a socioeconomic system. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course. Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 379-0 Topics in Modern Architecture (1 Unit)  Content varies—for example, Chicago architecture, including the work of Sullivan and Wright; Beaux Arts architecture in Europe and America; modernism in architecture; American architecture from Thomas Jefferson to Frank Lloyd Wright. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course.

ART_HIST 380-1 Tibetan Buddhist Art 1 (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. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course. Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 380-2 Tibetan Buddhist Art 2 (1 Unit)  Focused study of Buddhist art made in Tibet and neighboring countries. Art of the 15th-19th centuries, including regional developments in eastern and northeastern Tibet. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course. Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 382-1 Chinese Painting (1 Unit)  In-depth study of painting in China with consideration of formal and historical developments. Prerequisite: 200-level art history class. Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 384-0 African American Art (1 Unit)  Art of the African-descended cultures of North and South America and the Caribbean. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course. Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 385-0 Black Visual Culture: Race and Representation (1 Unit)  Examination of how visual representations and technologies of vision have been used to create, transform, or destabilize the idea of race as it pertains to people in the African diaspora at specific historical moments. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course. Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 386-0 Art of Africa (1 Unit)  Thematic and history examination of the art and visual culture of Africa at various historical moments from the ancient periods (Nubian Egypt) through the 15th century. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course. Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

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. Prerequisite: 200-level art history course.

ART_HIST 390-0 Undergraduate Seminar (1 Unit)  Content varies—for example, video’s first decade; readings in medieval art; Frank Lloyd Wright and Mies Van der Rohe, 1937-50; Bosch and Brueghel; Japanese prints; Jerusalem; the spaces of Chicago. Prerequisite: 300-level art history course.

ART_HIST 391-0 Art Historical Methods Seminar (1 Unit)  Introduction to the history of the discipline of art history and to the different methodological approaches to the study of art and visual culture. Prerequisite: 300-level art history course.

ART_HIST 395-0 Museums (1 Unit)  Museum studies seminars. Content varies—for example, the history of museums, their ethical basis, community responsibilities, educational prerogatives, and future directions. Prerequisite: 300-level art history course. Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

ART_HIST 396-0 Internship in the Arts (1 Unit)  Direct participation, with oversight by the director of undergraduate studies, in the curatorial/educational activities of an established arts organization. By petition, on a limited basis; may be taken only once. Prerequisite: 300-level art history course or consent of instructor.

ART_HIST 399-0 Independent Study (1 Unit)  Special projects involving reading and conferences with a supervising professor. Arranged in exceptional circumstances. Two quarters required for students writing a senior thesis in art history. Prerequisite: 300-level art history course.